

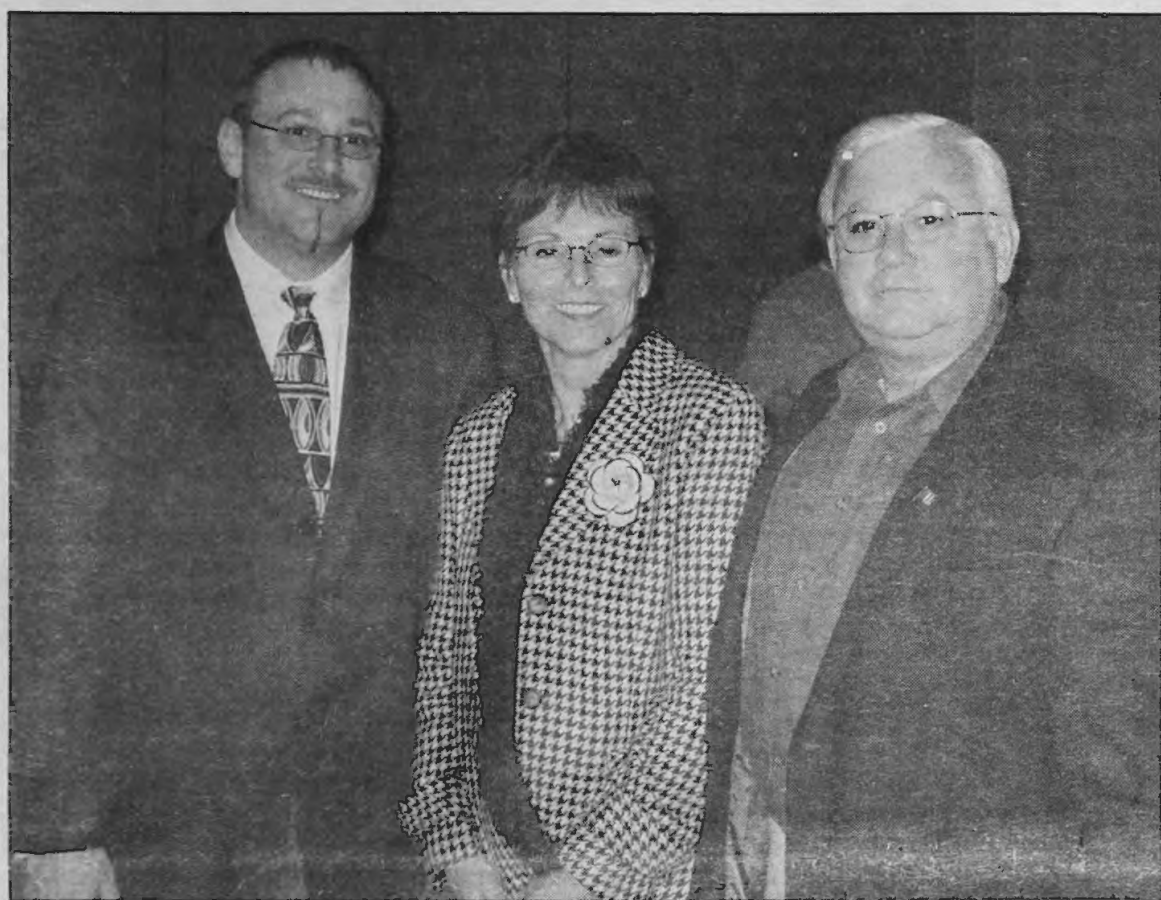


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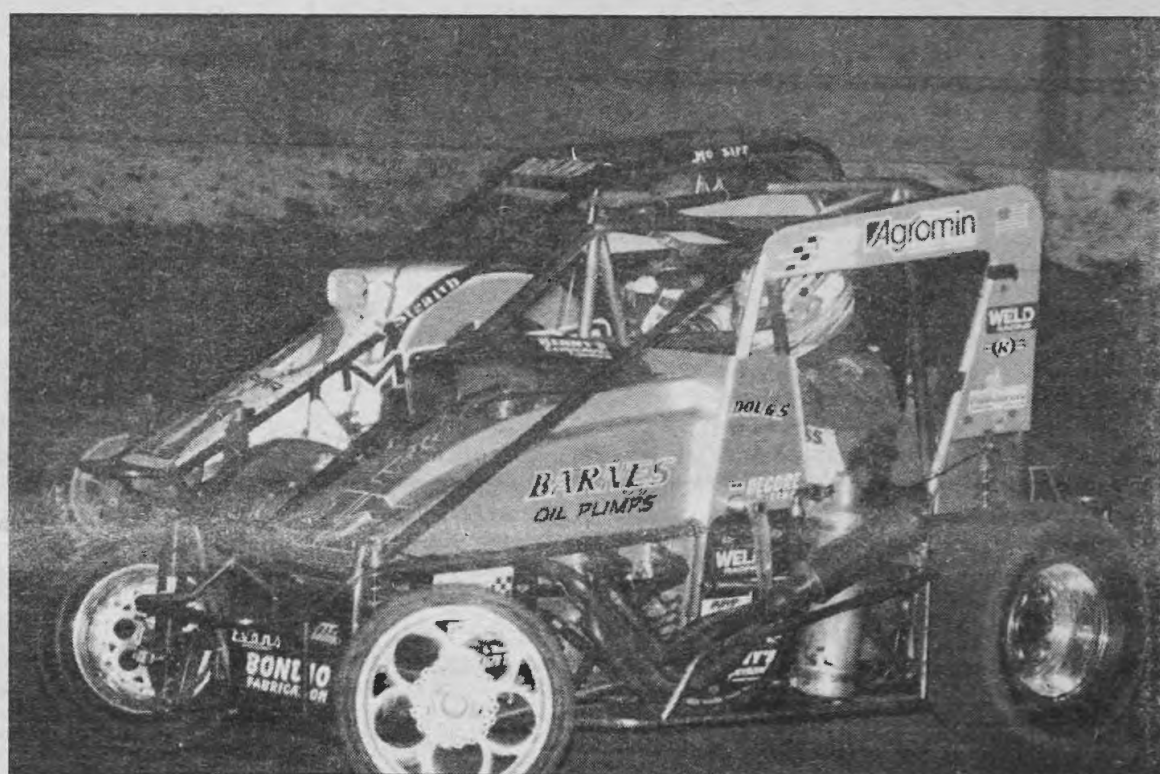
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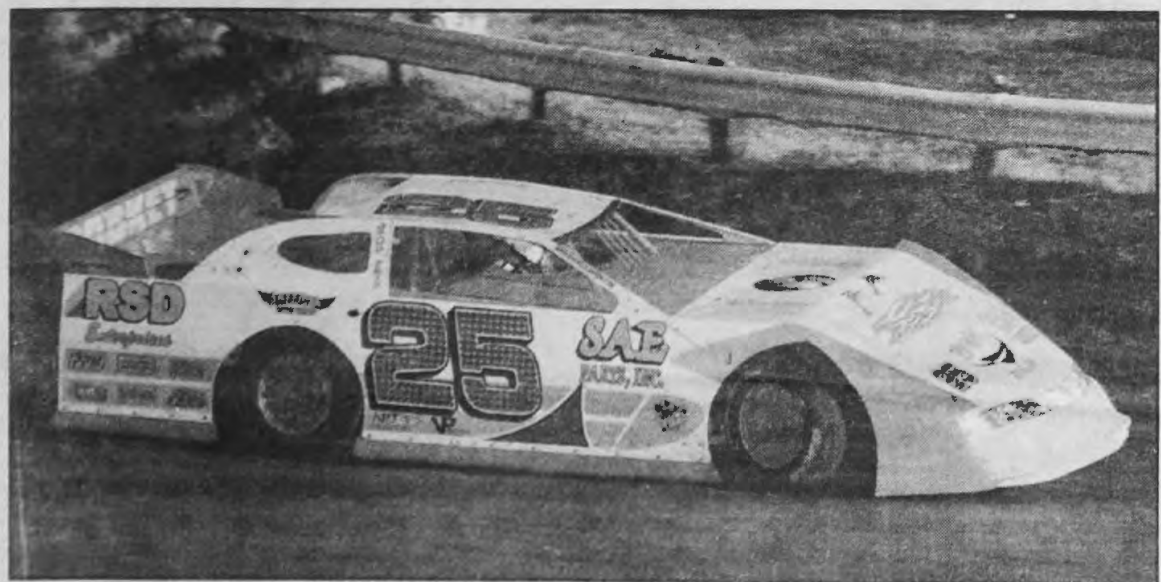
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Brad Mueller (l), with parents Elaine and Jerry, celebrate Brad's second straight late model track championship at the Slinger Super Speedway during the track's annual awards banquet January 9. **See Page 5.** (Fay Hendricks photo)



Cory Kruseman (outside) races with Dave Darland (11) for second place during the 19th Chili Bowl Midget Nationals on Saturday, January 9, at the Tulsa (OK) Expo Raceway. Notice Kruseman's unusual left-front tire and wheel. **See Pages 2-3.** (Sean Mizell photo)



Shane Clanton topped a 95-car late model field to win the "Ice Bowl" at the Talladega Short Track in Eastaboga, AL, on Saturday, January 9. **See Page 4.** (Neil Miller photo)



Donnie Schatz (15), shown here racing in Fargo, ND, in 2004, won the final-night A-main at the "Outlaws Down Under II" winged sprint car special event in Australia on Sunday, January 16. **See Page 6.** (Sean Mizell/file photo)

Hot Laps

Limited Space Available for Wisconsin Racers Swap Meet

MILWAUKEE, WI -- The Wisconsin Racers Swap Meet to be held January 29 at the Wisconsin State Fair Park, in the Wisconsin Products Pavilion just outside turn 4 of the famous Milwaukee Mile, is now full of vendors.

This swap meet and trade show will bring together many forms of circle track racing in one building.

If there is enough interest, access is available in an adjacent building. The building is not heated but is fully enclosed. A minimum of ten sellers and/or vendors is necessary to use the additional building. Booth spaces for the second building will run \$35 each for a 10'-x-10' booth. Please contact Shustring Racing as soon as possible to arrange for a space.

For more information, contact Shustring Racing by e-mail at <shustringracing@aol.com> or by phone at (866) 688-8665.

Outlaws will Return to Phoenix

McHENRY, IL -- SLS Promotions has recently announced that it will be bringing the World of Outlaws back to Phoenix.

Tickets for the second annual World of Outlaws Sprint Series-sanctioned "Cactus Classic" at the Manzanita Speedway in Phoenix, AZ, are now on sale through SLS Promotions. Tickets for the March 4-5 sprint car event are available by phone with a credit card by calling SLS at (815) 344-2023.

The World of Outlaws will return to Phoenix with more regulars than ever before in the series' history. At last year's inaugural Cactus Classic, Tyler Walker edged Steve Kinser on the opening night of the two-day affair, while Kinser turned the tables on Walker in the finale.

Full shows will be run each night, Friday and Saturday. A raindate is scheduled for Sunday, March 6.

New 'Let's Go Racing' Show Dates

LAKE GENEVA, WI -- Mike Babicz, promoter of the "Let's Go Racing" motorsports show, has recently announced that the dates for this year's show have changed. The 27th annual event - the largest free-to-the-public motorsports show in the country - will be held on March 11-13 at the Original Outlet Mall, at I-94 and Highway 50, five miles west of Kenosha. Originally the dates were set as March 18-20.

Drivers from all types of racing can participate, but they must first call to enter. The phone number is (847) 855-0019 after 7 pm on weeknights. Space is limited, as the response from drivers who regularly compete at the Lake Geneva Raceway has been phenomenal. Huge interest in the show has been received by car owners and racers of the INEX legends, bandoleros, Basic International Cars, super stocks, limited late models and mini-modifieds.

The next event for the Raceway will be the annual awards banquet on January 29 at Rumpoles in Twin Lakes. The 2004 champions will be honored for both the Friday and Saturday night weekly programs.

The Lake Geneva Raceway opens its 2005 weekly oval track season on April 9. The small-car class spring opener will be held on Friday night, May 6. For marketing opportunities, information on the banquet, or to reserve a number for a race car, call Dale Erdmann at (262) 878-3940.

Smith Fire Recovery Fund Set Up

CAMARGO, IL, January 2 -- Danny Smith, the driver who finished second in All Star Circuit of Champions sprint points in 2004, recently lost his race shop, cars and tools in a fire.

A recovery fund has been set up to help Danny start rebuilding his race team. Donations can be sent to the Danny Smith Racing Recovery Fund, c/o North Salem State Bank, 785 E. Main St., Box 167, Danville, IN 46122. The account number for the fund is 2315745; the bank telephone number is (317) 745-8544.

For more information, call (217) 352-9221.

Hines Escapes with Narrow Chili Bowl Midget Nationals Victory

TULSA, OK, January 8 -- The checkered flag flew none too soon for Indiana's Tracy Hines in Saturday night's 19th annual Chili Bowl Midget Nationals 50-lap championship finale at Tulsa Expo Raceway, as he held on in the final laps to post a slim victory over Cory Kruseman and Dave Darland and pick up his first "Golden Driller."

While Hines appeared to be on the way to a dominating victory in the early stages, the prestigious event turned into a nailbiter in the late rounds when Hines' inability to successfully navigate lapped traffic left the door open for his pursuers, who dashed through traffic with ease. In the end, Hines took the checkered flag less than two car-lengths ahead of two-time Chili Bowl champion Kruseman, with a fast-closing Darland taking the show position just a car-length back.

Hines drew the pole for Saturday's championship feature and gunned into the lead at the drop of the green flag. Following a brief lap 2 caution for Casey Shuman's damaged racer, Hines immediately separated himself from the field as Josh Ford held off Kruseman, Jones and Chad DeSelle.

Kruseman relegated Ford to third on lap 6 but trailed Hines by nearly a straightaway after ten laps, while Darland moved past P.J. Jones for fourth on lap 11. Hines was just encountering lapped traffic when the race's next caution flew on lap 12 for Tony Stewart's spin after contact; Stewart exited with suspension damage two laps later.

The race's third and final caution appeared after 19 circuits when Bud Kaeding, Jon Stanbrough and Gary Wright tangled. The final 31 laps were run non-stop, with Hines amassing a ten car-length advantage over Kruseman by lap 25.

But when lapped traffic came into play Kruseman began to chip away at that advantage, while Ford and Darland swapped the third spot several times. Kruseman closed to within two car-lengths of Hines and kept the pressure on the rest of the way, making several bids for the lead in heavy lapped traffic.

Darland finally assumed command of third from Ford on lap 42 and quickly reeled in the lead pair, drawing to within striking distance as the checkered flag flew over Hines. Ford earned an impressive fourth place finish, while ARDC champion Ray Bull made a strong charge from 13th to round out the top five.

New Zealand midget champion Michael Pickens raced from 19th to sixth to snare rookie of the year honors.

A record 249 entries competed in the 19th edition of the O'Reilly Chili Bowl Midget Nationals. With the larger-than-expected car count, the anticipated dashes for late model drivers and the lady racers were cancelled due to time constraints.

RESULTS

J Main 1: Kevin Doty, Burlington, IA; Kenny Love, Lincoln, NE; Rik Forbes, Omaha, NE

J Main 2: Brett Hearn, Sussex, NJ; Matt Brun, New Carlisle, OH; Bubba The Lovesponge, Tampa, FL

I Main 1: Marc Dailey, Concord, NC; Brian Gard, Kelseyville, CA; Doty

I Main 2: Hearn, Mark Bush, Cumming, GA; Brun

H Main 1: Doty, Jordan Noblitt, Columbus, IN; Kenny Brown, Millstadt, IL

H Main 2: Donnie Lehmann, Springfield, IL; Cruz Pedregon, Camarillo, CA; Aaron Fiscus, Sun Prairie, WI

G Main 1: Thomas Meseraull, San Jose, CA; Rick Eckert, York, PA; Brady Bacon, Broken Arrow

G Main 2: Travis Berryhill, American Canyon, CA; Don Droul, Jr., Lincoln, NE; Joe Boyles, Greenwood, MO

F Main 1: Aaron Fike, Galesburg, IL; Greg Lueckert, Kansas City, MO; Buddy Luebke, Stoughton, WI

F Main 2: Josh Wise, Riverside, CA; Jerome Rodela, El Monte, CA; Johnny Heydenreich, Indianapolis, IN

E Main 1: John Wolfe, Winchester, IN; Brad Kuhn, Avon, IN; Adam Young, Phoenix, AZ

E Main 2: Bugs Norbury, Prescott Valley, AZ; Scott Pierovich, Alamo, CA; Wise

D Main 1: Danny Stratton, Fontana, CA; Mat Neely, Robinson, IL; Kuhn

D Main 2: Teddy Beach, Donnelsville, OH; Rick Hendrix, Canoga Park, CA; Jason Meyers, Clovis, CA

C Main 1: Shane Hollingsworth, Indianapolis, IN; Dan Boorse, Milwaukee, WI; Kuhn

C Main 2: Brandon Waelti, Sun Prairie, WI; Davey Ray, Davenport, IA; Mike Hess, Petersburg, IL

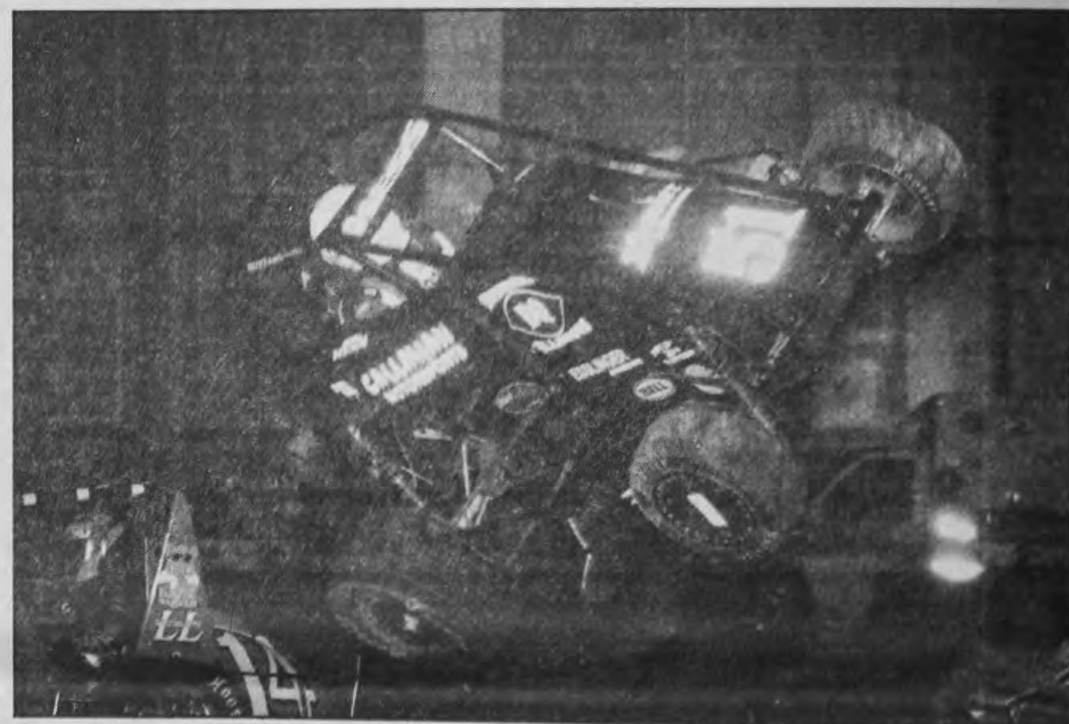
B Main 1: Ray Bull, Bloomsburg, PA; Paul White, Temple, TX; Brian Gerster, Noblesville, IN

B Main 2: Jon Stanbrough, Danville, IN; Jerry Coons, Jr., Tucson, AZ; Tim McCreadie, Watertown, NY

A Main: Tracy Hines, Greenfield, IN; Cory Kruseman, Ventura, CA; Dave Darland, Lincoln, IN; Josh Ford, Ventura, CA; Ray Bull, Bloomsburg, PA; Michael Pickens, Auckland, New Zealand; P.J. Jones, Torrance, CA; Bobby East, Brownsburg, IN; McCreadie, Gerster



Tracy Hines is on his way to his first Chili Bowl victory Saturday, January 8, at Tulsa Expo Raceway.



Mike Hess (51) flips during a Chili Bowl qualifying race.



Bobby East (4) races with P.J. Jones (17) in the Chili Bowl A-main.



Dave Darland (11) works down low while Tony Stewart (20) works the high side in an early battle for third place in the Chili Bowl A-main. Stewart only made a few laps before he wrecked and could not continue.

(Sean Mizell photos)

Drivers' Meeting for 'Burg Set

LUXEMBURG, WI -- An informational meeting for drivers planning to compete at Luxemburg Speedway in 2005 will be held at Rendezvous Pleasure Palace in the town of Nueren on Friday night, February 11, at 7 pm.

Teams will be able to secure pre-paid pit stalls at this meeting, and an update on the season schedule and track improvements will be given by track manager Rick Goral. Also, some new IMCA rules, including the allowance of 14- and 15-year-olds to compete in the hobby stock division, will be discussed.

Rendezvous Pleasure Palace is located four miles south of the race track on County N in the town of Luxemburg. From Green Bay it is approximately 11 miles east via County Highway V, then north on 'N' approximately one mile. For more information, call (920) 845-2066. For further details, call (920) 863-8446.

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Josh Ford drove flawlessly to top the January 5 qualifying showdown at the 19th annual Chili Bowl Midget Nationals. (Lonnie Wheatley photo)

Ford Cashes In at Chili Bowl Qualifier

TULSA, OK, January 5 — The 19th edition of the Chili Bowl Midget Nationals kicked off at Tulsa Expo Raceway Wednesday night, with California's Josh Ford scoring an impressive wire-to-wire triumph in the 25-lap qualifying "Showdown."

Ford was chased to the line by Wisconsin shoe Chad DeSelle, Missouri's Danny Lasoski and Arizona's Casey Shuman.

Ford earned the pole for the qualifier by racing from seventh to win the third of the evening's dozen heat races. Ford was joined on the front row by fellow heat winner Mike Welker and outgunned Welker at the drop of the green and led fifth-starter Jon Stanbrough, seventh-starter DeSelle and Steve Buckwalter in completing the first lap. The caution flew moments later when Welker looped his mount, and on the ensuing restart Welker toppled his mount in the same corner.

Ford set the pace on the restart, while DeSelle soon took command of second from Stanbrough. After a lap 7 caution for a three-car tangle, Brandon Waelti spun after making contact with Stanbrough while racing for fourth.

The final 18 rounds were run non-stop, with Ford piloting flawlessly to capture the win. DeSelle held second the rest of the way, while Lasoski advanced from his 12th starting position into sixth by the lap 7 caution, then moved to fourth by lap 10. Lasoski snared the show position on lap 23 from Shuman, and Stanbrough settled for a fifth-place finish.

There were in excess of a dozen flip victims in Wednesday's action, with R.J. Johnson, Zach Chappell and Matt Michaels taking the wildest of the rides. There were no injuries.

The five-lap Late Model Challenge, featuring Rick Eckert, Bart Hartman, Tim McCreddie and Jeep Van Wormer, was postponed to Friday night due to time constraints.

RESULTS

Heat 1: Tyler Brown, Norco, CA; Dustin Morgan, Owasso; Damion Gardner, Concord, CA.
Heat 2: Jon Stanbrough, Danville, IN; Paul White, Temple, TX; Nelson Stewart, Avon, IN.
Heat 3: Josh Ford, Ventura, CA; Rick Hendrix, Canoga Park, CA; Brad Kuhn, Avon, IN.
Heat 4: Cole Carter, Brownsburg, IN; Tracy Miller, Reading, PA; Garratt Boyden, Santa Cruz, CA.
Heat 5: Steve Buckwalter, Royersford, PA; Chad DeSelle, Sun Prairie, WI; Sparky Howard, Santa Rosa, CA.
Heat 6: Casey Shuman, Chandler, AZ; Greg Lueckert, Kansas City, MO; Jerome Rodela, El Monte, CA.
Heat 7: Mike Spencer, Temecula, CA; Danny Lasoski, Dover, MO; Chris D'Arcy, San Jose, CA.
Heat 8: Joey Montgomery, Fredericktown, MO; Levi Jones, Olney, IL; Bugs Norbury, Prescott Valley, AZ.
Heat 9: Mike Welker, Peoria, AZ; Davey Ray, Davenport, IA; Brett Anderson, Belleville, IL.
Heat 10: Nick Lundgreen, Indianapolis, IN; Jason Yount, Fresno, CA; Jason Meyers, Clovis, CA.
Heat 11: Brandon Waelti, Sun Prairie, WI; Frank Polimeda, Fort Lee, NJ; Kyle Rayburn, Pueblo West, CO.
Heat 12: Dan Boorse, Milwaukee, WI; Thomas Briggs, Anna, OH; Kevin Olson, Rockford, IL.
D Main: J.J. Yeley, Stilesville, IN; Matt Hummel, Brownsburg, IN; Shannon McQueen, Bakersfield, CA.
C Main 1: Cody Weisensel, Sun Prairie, WI; Randi Pankratz, Atascadero, CA; R.J. Johnson, Phoenix, AZ.
C Main 2: Bob Harr, Arvada, CO; Adam Young, Phoenix, AZ; Shane Carson, Yukon, OK.
B Main 1: White; Jones; Howard.
B Main 2: Montgomery; Gardner; Jay Drake, Val Verde, CA.
A Main: Ford; DeSelle; Lasoski; Shuman; Stanbrough; White; Buckwalter; Olson; Spencer; Carter.

Super Truck Series Combined; '05 Opener Set for Madison

OREGON, WI -- The Mid-American and Midwest Super Truck Racing Series have been combined into one division following several meetings to blend rules.

Both series were begun in 1997, with the Mid-Am super trucks using a sportsman-style chassis and a 500-horsepower motor. The Midwest Super Trucks, which have raced primarily Friday nights at Madison International Speedway in Oregon, are built on a late model-style chassis with a 400-horsepower sealed motor.

Weight will be added to the Midwest Super Trucks so they will more closely match the Mid-Am trucks. Both styles of trucks will also be using eight-inch Hoosier 75 tires; the Midwest Truck Series had been utilizing ten-inch tires.

The Mid-American super trucks will be invited to compete at MIS on Friday nights and the Midwest Super Truck drivers will be encouraged to race in Mid-Am Series events. All races will continue to be contested on paved

tracks.

The opening race in the Mid-American Super Truck Series will be at Madison on Friday night, May 13, with the season running through Saturday night, October 8, at LaCrosse Fairgrounds Speedway in West Salem. The Mid-Am schedule is expected to cover five states, with one of the highlighted races on Saturday afternoon, August 27, at The Milwaukee Mile.

"We've had a lot of enthusiasm about the trucks from our competitors," said MIS manager Steve Einhaus recently. "We'll avoid any scheduling conflicts so our drivers can race in the touring series."

"We're both committed to making this work," said Mid-Am Series president Gary Vercauteren. "There are about 80 super trucks in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota, and we're both trying to get more to turn out at the race track."

For additional information, call the Mid-American Series office at (920) 823-2856.

Kruseman Captures Friday Chili Bowl Qualifier

TULSA, OK, January 7 -- With a motorcycle tire bolted on the left-front of his racer, Cory Kruseman moved a step closer to capturing a third Golden Driller trophy by topping Friday night's qualifying feature at the 19th annual Chili Bowl Midget Nationals at Tulsa Expo Raceway.

The two-time and defending Chili Bowl kingpin survived a late bid from P.J. Jones to secure his fourth career Chili Bowl preliminary triumph. Jones settled for the runner-up finish, with Dave Darland and Bobby East claiming the final two top-four positions.

Kruseman earned the pole for Friday's feature by charging from seventh to win the 11th of the evening's dozen heat races. Kruseman gunned into the lead at the drop of the green flag and led Jones, East, Brian Gerster and Craig Carey across the line the first time around, but the caution flew moments later for Clay Klepper, who slid to a halt with front-end damage.

Kruseman led Jones and East on the restart, while ninth starter Steve Kinser quickly advanced to fourth. The caution flew again after five rounds when Matt Mitchell and Carey tangled. Darland was in third by the eighth round, and Jones challenged Kruseman for the lead on the tenth round, only to see Kruseman eventually slip away to a half-dozen car-length advantage. Darland took second from Jones on lap 16, but Jones regained the position by the time the caution flew after 22 rounds for a six-car tangle.

Jones moved in on Kruseman's rear bumper on the restart, while Kinser made a bid for fourth but spun after sliding past East. Jones made a last effort for the win as he dove under Kruseman in turn 3 on lap 24, but Kruseman was up to the task



Dave Darland (11), Steve Kinser (67) and Bobby East (4b) battle for position in Friday night's qualifying feature for the 19th annual Chili Bowl Midget Nationals at the Tulsa Expo Raceway. (Lonnie Wheatley photo)

and drove to the stripe with a two car-length advantage over Jones. Darland held the show position to the line, while East held off a host of challengers for fourth during a frantic final lap. Gerster rounded out the top five.

Flip victims on the night included Justin Allgaier, Brett Hearn, Chris Morway, Ryan Cole, Steve Newman, Aaron Kirk, John Sarna, Chris Kopczynski and Ricky Johnson. There were no injuries.

A total of 249 drivers tried their hand over three nights of qualifying action at the Chili Bowl Midget Nationals.

RESULTS

Heat 1: Robby Flock, Murrieta, CA; Teddy Beach, Donnelsville, OH; Doug Hunting, Elk Grove, CA.
Heat 2: Bobby East, Brownsburg, IN; Brian Gerster, Noblesville, IN; Jackie Burke, Houston, TX.
Heat 3: Steve Kinser, Bloomington, IN; Craig Carey, Riverton, IL; Chns Rahe, Placentia, CA.
Heat 4: Dave Darland, Lincoln, IN; Johnny Rodriguez, Elk Grove, CA; Jeff Henry, Glendale, AZ.
Heat 5: Mike Hess, Petersburg, IL; Johnny Heydenreich, Indianapolis, IN; Tony Elliott, Kokomo, IN.
Heat 6: Jerry Coons, Jr., Tucson, AZ; Clay Klepper, Brownsburg, IN; Chris Kopczynski,

Noblesville, IN.

Heat 7: P.J. Jones, Torrance, CA; Mike Woodruff, Satanta, KS; John Sarna, Sedona, AZ.

Heat 8: Michael Pickens, Auckland, New Zealand; Alex Pruett, Carefree, AZ; Mat Neely, Robinson, IL.

Heat 9: David Gough, Machesney Park, IL; Randy Koch, Oregon, WI; Aaron Fike, Galesburg, IL.

Heat 10: Jimmy Sills, Elverta, CA; Billy Wease, Noblesville, IN; Shane Cottle, Kokomo, IN.

Heat 11: Cory Kruseman, Ventura, CA; Don Hammer, Clinton, IL; Matt Johnson, Oklahoma City.

Heat 12: Matt Mitchell, Yorba Linda, CA; Justin Allgaier, Riverton, IL; Bryan Kobylarz, Birdsboro, PA.

D Main 1: Carey Becker, Reading, PA; Travis Berryhill, American Canyon, CA; Kevin Doty, Burlington, IA.

D Main 2: Darren Stewart, Bixby; Seth Wilson, San Clemente, CA; Quinton Sall, San Jose, CA.

C Main 1: Rip Williams, Yorba Linda, CA; Scott Pierovich, Alamo, CA; Travis Berryhill, American Canyon, AZ.

C Main 2: Kasey Kahne, Huntersville, NC; Steve Paden, Downey, CA; Rick Eckert, York, PA.

B Main 1: Flock; Sills; Klepper.

B Main 2: Hess; Steve Paden, Downey, CA; Tyler Walker, Los Angeles, CA.

A Main: Kruseman; Jones; Darland; East; Gerster; Coons; Pickens; Gough; Walker; Rodriguez.

NASCAR Bans Hutchens

HANS device only approved restraint system for '05

DAYTONA BEACH, FL, January 4 -- NASCAR will only allow its competitors to use the HANS device in 2005 because the other head-and-neck restraint system did not meet performance standards.

Drivers have had a choice of restraint systems since 2001, when NASCAR began requiring all competitors to use either the HANS or Hutchens devices following an investigation of Dale Earnhardt's death at Daytona International Speedway.

NASCAR spokesman Mike Zizzo said Monday that the Hutchens failed to meet minimum standards from testing by SFI Foundation, Inc. The HANS device was approved by SFI, a California-based nonprofit organization that sets standards for specialty and performance automotive and racing equipment.

The HANS (Head and Neck Support) resembles a collar and slides on like a football players' shoulder pads, then hooks onto the helmet. The Hutchens device is a series of straps that connect across the chest and at the waist.

Most drivers preferred the HANS, but Ryan Newman and Tony Stewart have been known to race with the Hutchens.

NASCAR mandated use of a restraint system in October 2001, after an investigation of Earnhardt's death the previous February. Earnhardt died of a skull fracture - the same injury that killed NASCAR drivers Adam Petty, Kenny Irwin and Tony Roper and drag racer Blaise Alexander in a 17-month span.

Many experts believed the fractures could have been prevented with use of a restraint system. But with drivers reluctant to use restraint systems and lingering questions about their effectiveness, NASCAR did not require their use until Earnhardt's death made the issue a top priority.

After numerous studies, the sanctioning body required the use of a restraint and allowed drivers to choose.

Last season, NASCAR evaluated several different systems, hoping to approve new ones before the 2005 season.

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Meulemans Takes Another 141 New Year's Day Enduro Win

FRANCIS CREEK, WI, January 1 -- A modest-sized but enthusiastic crowd came to the 141 Speedway on New Year's Day and were treated to the annual 200-lap compact car enduro race that kicked off the 2005 season.

David Beyer led the field at the drop of the green flag but battled with Jeff Meulemans of Appleton by the time they had reached the first turn. Meulemans took the top spot on lap 16, with Mike Graziano moving to second place and veteran enduro racer Frank Calabrese third.

The first 100 laps were filled with a number of minor incidents and spins but no serious contact occurred until lap 121, when the car driven by Jacob Wilcox got sideways on the front stretch and collided head-on with the turn 1 wall. Wilcox was winded and sustained a minor leg injury but was otherwise unhurt.

After a mandatory yellow flag was thrown at lap 100 for gas and tires, Meulemans retook the lead and never relinquished it. It was his fifth enduro win at 141 and, since it was the first race of the year, he also leads the points. Graziano backed up his October win with a solid second-place run, and Calabrese, Elliot Marquart and David Beyer rounded out the top five. It was the first top-five finish ever for Marquart.

The next event at 141 is the "April Fools" enduro race on April 2. This will be a 300-lap event with a start time of 2 pm. Regular Saturday night racing returns April 30 with a season-opening 50-lap race for Mid-American stock cars and a full program of racing in four other divisions.

Langlade County Speedway Announces 2005 Schedule

ANTIGO, WI, December 23 -- Antigo Stock Car, Inc., has announced its schedule for the 2005 race season at the Langlade County Speedway.

The season will start on Friday night, May 13, and run through September 2. There will be no regular racing on June 10, as the off-road races will be in town that weekend.

There will be several specials held at the Speedway

again this season. On Saturday, August 6, the IRA sprints will make their third appearance here, with a rain date set for Sunday, the seventh. On October 7-8 the Speedway will host the third annual Indian Summer Classic, with a rain date, if needed, set for Sunday the ninth.

The weekly Friday night race program includes WIS-

SOTA late models at street stocks, IMCA modifieds and stock cars, and ASCI trucks. The schedule is tentative and subject to change. Racing begins at 7:15 pm. Langlade County Speedway is located on the north side of Antigo, just off of Highway 45 at the Langlade County Fairgrounds. For more information please contact the track at (715) 623-3584.

MARS LMs to Invade Elko in '05

ELKO, MN, December 7 -- Officials of Elko Speedway and the Midwest AllStar Late Model Series have announced plans to include MARS as part of the track's Super Summer Series.

MARS series competitors will compete for both series' points on three dates during the 2005 season - on Saturday, June 25; Saturday, August 6; and Sunday, September 4, as part of the speedway's three-day "Minnesota 300" weekend.

Thirty-two competitors from three states took part in the Series' inaugural season last summer, with Greenfield's Jon Lemke claiming the

championship by just two points over Jake Ryan. The series includes two 40-lap features on each race date with each feature paying \$1,500 to win. The Series' points payout will go to the top 20 in the standings at the end of the season.

Kimberly, WI, native Jeff Van Oudenhoven laid claim to the 2004 MARS championship over Minnesota drivers Blake Bjorklund and Trent Snyder.

For more information, contact the Speedway at (952) 461-RACE (7223) or (800) 479-3630.

Luxemburg Ready for New Year

LUXEMBURG, WI -- An 2005 racing season opener of Friday night, April 29, has been scheduled for Luxemburg Speedway's third-mile clay oval located at the Kewaunee County Fairgrounds in Luxemburg.

As in 2004, IMCA modifieds, stock cars and hobby

stocks plus four-cylinder sport fours will compete each Friday night beginning at 7 pm. Weekly racing will resume through Labor Day weekend.

A pair of late model specials will highlight the 2005 schedule. On Friday night, June 10, the fourth annual

"Battle of the 'Burg IV" will take place, while a second late model show will be held on Sunday night, July 10. Both shows will be run under the sanction of the Wisconsin Dirt Late Model Association and will feature similar payouts to those in years past.

Something new for the Speedway in 2005 will be the Lady Fours, a new division in which only ladies are allowed to compete in sport fours. "We plan on having them compete roughly every other week," said track manager Rick Goral. "I've had quite a few e-mails from some ladies who are real excited about this class. They'll run for full point standings, and they cannot be currently competing in any other division at the track."

A car show, practice session and safety inspection is tentatively slated for Friday night, April 22, at the track. Track officials are in the process of finalizing a season schedule and expect to have it released in the near future.

For further details on Luxemburg Speedway, call (920) 863-8446.

West Coast Hall of Famer Dane Passes

NEWPORT BEACH, CA, December 27 -- Carl Dane, a prominent car owner and crew chief during the early years of stock car racing on the West Coast, passed away on Saturday, December 25, in Newport Beach. He was 84.

Dane was an early pioneer in the development of stock cars in both NASCAR and USAC and remained involved in the sport through the early 1970s. The list of drivers who raced his cars included Parnelli Jones, Mario Andretti, Marvin Porter, Ralph Moody, Troy Ruttman, Chuck Stevenson, Danny Letner and Al Pombo, as well as Dane's younger brother, Lloyd.

Carl was preceded in death by his older brother, Jim, who was also a car owner on the West Coast. They are survived by Lloyd, who lives in Harrisburg, NC. All three brothers were inaugural inductees into the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame in 2002.



Shane Clanton (25) used a pass of Ricky Williams on lap 11 to take the lead of the Ice Bowl feature at the Talladega Short Track on January 9, and he held on from there for the victory. (Neil Miller photo)

Clanton Claims 'Ice Bowl' Victory

EASTABOGA, AL, January 9 -- Shane Clanton of Locust Grove, GA, slipped underneath of Ricky Williams coming off of turn 4 on lap 11, then held off a late-charge by Williams to claim the win in the annual "Ice Bowl" event at Talladega Short Track on a sunny beautiful Sunday afternoon.

A field of 361 race cars, including 95 dirt super late models, entered the pit area over the weekend trying to claim the Ice Bowl title.

At the drop of the green Williams quickly jumped ahead of Clanton, Aaron Ridley and Frank Ingram as the field strung out for the first few laps. By lap 8 lapped traffic came into play, and Williams jumped to the high side and lapped Jon Miller. With Williams out high, Clanton dove down low and made the pass to take the lead. One lap later the caution flew for the first time for the slowing machine of Miller.

As the race resumed Clanton quickly jumped out to a car-length lead, but the second caution of the race flew just two laps later for Tony Morris' stalled machine.

As the field rode down for the green, Clanton again jumped to a car-length lead over Williams, Ridley, Ingram and Mike Head. The top four stayed the same for the next several laps until lapped traffic again came into play. Clanton dove underneath Randy Hemphill to put him a lap down on lap 23 and Williams quickly followed. On lap 25 Ridley tried to work under Hemphill as well, but he slid up and the two tangled, sending Hemphill around and causing the third caution of the race.

As the field restarted the caution flew for the spun car of Ted Lackey. The caution flew again just two laps later, this time for the spun machine of fifth-place Mike Head.

Lap 37 saw the final caution of the race, for a spun Tim Roszell, setting up a 13-lap shootout in which Clanton held off Williams in lapped traffic to claim his second Ice Bowl win and the \$6,000 top prize. Ridley held on for

third, with Todd Morrow fourth after Ingram stalled on the final lap. Lamar Scoggins claimed fifth.

In other action, Jason Hiett led all 20 laps of the Sportsman feature to claim the win, holding off Ben Kittrell, who finished second, and John Owenby in third. Fourth went to Chris Jones, with Head rounding out the top five.

Myron Deyoung of Crystal Lake, IL, claimed the win in the 20-lap IMCA modified event, holding off Eddie Rhinehardt and Henry Hanger. Fourth position went to Matt Pickette, and Eric Smith rounded out the top five.

Barry Burroughs held on to win the first of the Ice Bowl A-mains on Saturday night, holding off Allen Carter, Scott Maquirk, Joseph Picklesimer and David Kelly.

Scott Cooper won the 20-lap Pony main event, holding off Wayne Walls, Roland McKelvin, John Cobb and Mark Dale.

RESULTS

LATE MODELS

Feature: 1-10: Shane Clanton, Ricky Williams, Aaron Ridley, Todd Morrow, Lamar Scoggins, Ronald Dunn, Ross Martin, David Gentry, Brandon King, Royce Bray.

11-20: Rodney Martin, Johnny Stokes, Tim Roszell, Joey Standridge, Frank Ingram, Joe Armistead, Jr., Brandon Ifft, Randy Hemphill, Jimmy Hudgins, Mike Head.

21-25: Terry Smith, Randall Walker, Ted Lackey, Tony Morris, Jon Miller.

SPORTSMAN

Feature: Jason Hiett, Ben Kittrell, John Owenby, Chris Jones, Mike Head, Stevie Waters, Chip Brindle, Brian Ponder, Ty Lowe, David Gentry.

IMCA MODIFIEDS

Feature: Myron Deyoung, Eddie Rhinehart, Henry Hanger, Matt Pickette, Eric Smith, Jamie Wynn, Scotty Hiett, Danny Cosby, Eddie Creed, Jamie Kuntz.

THUNDERCARS

Feature: Barry Burroughs, Allen Carter, Scott Maquirk, Joseph Picklesimer, David Kelley, Roscoe Collins, Logan Yates, Paul Alfred, Bart Starr, Kenny Stanfield.

PONY STOCKS

Feature: Scott Cooper, Wayne Walls, Roland McKelvin, John Cobb, Mark Dale, Johnny Wilson, Larry Housley, Jason Bates, Steven Bryan, Donny Moore.



A sharp-looking car and some smooth driving earned David Earl Gentry the most popular driver vote at the Ice Bowl in Alabama. (Neil Miller photo)

Eldridge Joins Ventuini as Crew Chief

CONCORD, NC, December 11 -- ARCA Series team Venturini Motorsports has turned to Scott Eldridge to crew chief car driven by Billy Venturini.

Eldridge crew-chiefted the car driven by Jason Jarrett in 2001-'03.

Butz Racing Adds 16-Year-Old To MARS LM Team

ST. PAUL, MN, December 24 -- Wisconsin-based Mike Butz Racing has added another car to its racing stable for the 2005 season, with the addition of 16-year-old driver Andy Hanson from Ramsey.

Hanson will pilot the number 42 entry for the team during the upcoming Midwest Allstar Racing Series late model schedule. Hanson will team with three-time defending Series champion Jeff VanOudenhoven of Kimberly, WI.

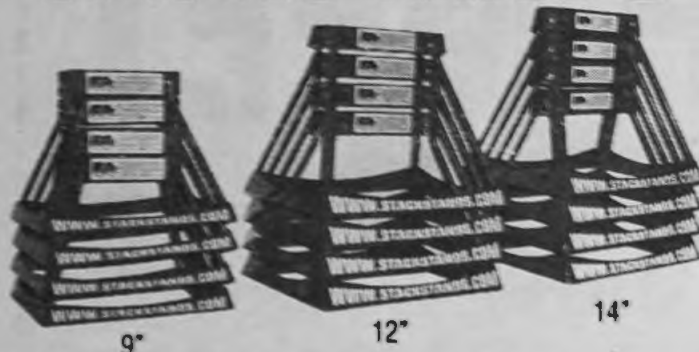
Long Haul Trucking of Albertville has inked a deal as the primary sponsor of the car, with Till-Fab Limited of Norwich, Ont., as an associate sponsor.

Hanson recently completed his rookie season in super late models in 2004, compiling three feature wins, a track qualifying record, rookie of the year and runner-up honors in points at Fergus Falls Raceway. Hanson also took the rookie of the year award and a fourth-place finish in points at I-94 Raceway.

Butz Racing has a long history of developing young, talented race car drivers into champions. 2003 NASCAR Winston Cup champion Matt Kenseth drove for Mike Butz from 1993-1996. Others who have driven Butz-owned and prepared cars include Jimmy Spencer, Kenny Wallace, Ken Schrader and Cale Yarborough.

More information on developing sponsor relationships, the team and special-event appearances will be forthcoming in the near future. Anyone interested in joining the race team should contact Bob Hanson at (651) 487-1431 or by cell at (612) 716-4519.

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Nineteen Earn 'Golden Drillers' in Tulsa Shootout

by Lonnie Wheatley

TULSA, OK, January 1 -- Nineteen different drivers from 11 different states made their way to victory lane in Saturday night's 20th Anniversary Tulsa Shootout finale at Tulsa Expo Raceway.

The night's big winners were Nebraska's Jody Krug, who collected three "Golden Drillers" in kart action, and Iowans Jamie Ferrell and Chad Waller, who both scored a pair of kart wins. In the dozen kart main events, eight different drivers from six different states (Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, Tennessee and Wisconsin) collected "Golden Driller" trophies.

Krug raced past Kyle Lentz en route to his first win of the night in the Stock Light feature. Krug beat Aaron Marrant to the line by just 0.696 seconds, with Mike Halliburton a close third. Krug then made it two in a row by scoring a wire-to-wire win in the Briggs Animal Heavy feature, beating Byron Parrish to the line by 3.704 seconds.

Krug's final victory of the night came in the first Stock Medium feature, where he topped Waller and Marrant.

Ferrell's first triumph of the night came in the Run What Ya Brung main event, in which he scored a commanding 8.579-second victory over Rick Sullivan. Chuck Clark was the final kart on the lead lap. Ferrell collected his second "Golden Driller" of the night by topping a hotly-contested Yamaha KT 100 feature, becoming the race's fourth different leader on lap 16 and beating Forsyth to the line by just 0.640 seconds. Clark was third.

Waller posted his first victory by beating Aaron Marrant and Chris Marrant to the stripe in the Blue Wazoom main event. Waller's second victory of the night came in wire-to-wire fashion, as he led Chris Marrant and Daniel Mabry to the line in the Stock Heavy feature.

Halliburton, of Columbia, MO, topped the Briggs Animal Medium feature in wire-to-wire fashion, beating Don Young to the line by 2.863 seconds. Byron Parrish and Tyler Stevens rounded out the top three.

Green Bay, WI's Lentz overtook Ken Murphy on the third lap en route to winning the second Stock Medium feature by 1.173 seconds over Josh Most and James Murphy.

Patrick Mahnken beat Will Holder and early leader Lucas Wallace to the line in the Super Junior II feature, while Holder made a late move to take the checkered flag in the Junior II main event in front of Joey Lile and Charles Wood. Darrin Zomer took command on the second round and raced to a 2.230-second triumph in the Junior I feature in front of Nate Carruth and Jarin Cass.

In micro sprint action, California's Stan Yockey and Delaware's Scotty Smith split honors in 600cc Multi competition. Other micro winners included Oklahoma drivers Donnie Crawford (non-wing), Kevin Bayer ("A" class) and Dalton Cole (restricted "A" class), with California's Mitch Faccinto topping the junior sprints.

Starting from the front row outside, Yockey outgunned polesitter Jonathan Hendrick at the drop of the green flag in the headline 600cc Multi feature and paced the field all the way. Tulsa drivers Scott Sawyer, Kevin Bayer and Jerrod Wilson engaged in a spirited duel for second before 12th-starter Wilson took command of the position following a lap 12 restart, but Wilson was no match for Yockey.

In the second 600cc Micro feature, Indiana's Anthony Peterman led the way until misfortune struck on lap 13, as he was collected by a spinning lapped car. Smith took command on the restart and held off B.J. Fay and Brady Bacon in the closing rounds.

Crawford kicked off the night by scoring a wire-to-wire win in the non-wing feature. Crawford outgunned Dean Alexander on the opening round, then raced to the stripe in front of Alexander and Ronnie Smith.

Bayer used the high line to race past early pacesetter Crawford en route to topping the "A" class main event. Bayer collected his first "Golden Driller" trophy since 1995, with Crawford and Kenny Koelsch following.

Cole led the distance in the restricted "A" class main event, holding off the advances of Denny Felker, Jr., to score the victory. Cole and Felker were chased to the line by Kevin Harris.

Faccinto cruised to the checkered flag unchallenged in the junior sprint feature, with Jimmy Wood outdueling 12th-starter Myles Moos and Justin Sanders for the runner-up slot.

The Quads had four different winners in four races, as Gregg Bakker's eleven-year stretch of at least one Pro Quad triumph was put to a halt by Mitch Reynolds and Brad Covington, who topped the Open and 250cc portions, respectively, of Saturday night's action. Bakker, who had collected 13 "Golden Drillers" over the 11 Tulsa Shootouts contested from 1994-2004, could only muster finishes of sixth in the Open Pros and eighth in the 250cc Pros.

In Amateur Quad action, Texas Thomas Brown took advantage of Todd Harrell's late misfortune to top the Open feature. Harrell led the opening ten rounds of the Open Amateur main, only to surrender the lead when his machine stalled on the white-flag lap. Tim

Macrae and Jason McAllister trailed Brown.

Iowa sprint car driver Eric Vanderploeg led all the way in the 250cc main event. Vanderploeg paced the field the entire distance to take the win in front of Kale Chronister and Macrae.

Hailing from Greenbrier, AR, Reynolds scored a wire-to-wire win in the Pro Quad feature, withstanding race-long pressure from Covington. Jon Reineccius took the show position.

Also from Arkansas, Covington held off Daryl Rath to post the 250cc Pro win, with Derrick Clark third.

The Tulsa Shootout attracted 1,105 entries from 28 different states throughout the nation and one from England. A total of 241 races were contested over the two-day event, including 155 heat races, 64 B-mains and 22 A-mains.

RESULTS

MICRO SPRINTS

600cc Multis Main Event: Stan Yockey, Fresno, CA; Jerrod Wilson, Tulsa; Kevin Bayer, Broken Arrow; Scott Sawyer, Broken Arrow; Jonathan Beason, Broken Arrow; Audra Sasselli, Fresno, CA; Austin Laskey, Tulsa; Kenny Koelsch, Tulsa; Chris Berreth, Tulsa; Stan Wiggam, Kokomo, IN.

600cc Multis Feature 2: Scotty Smith, Middletown, DE; B.J. Fay, Claremore; Brady Bacon, Broken Arrow; Chad Wheeler, Muskogee; Bob Bourff, Sharpville, IN; Jacob Mosley, Tulsa; Gregg Dillon, Terre Haute, IN; Ryan Jones, Metamora, IL; Derrick Sinks, Eldorado, IL; Ryan Duke, Claremore.

A Class: Bayer; Donnie Crawford, Broken Arrow; Koelsch; Josh Pickle, Claremore; Beason; Jack Potter, Pleasant Hill, MO; Chad Boat, Phoenix, AZ; Bourff; Taryn Laskey, Tulsa; Ryan Criswell, Mt. Vernon, IL.

Non-Wing: Crawford; Dean Alexander, Visalia, CA; Ronnie Smith, Peralta, NM; Cody Cordell, Tulsa; Jonathan Halford, Tulsa; Ronnie James, Sapulpa; A. Laskey; Chris Windom, Canton, IL; Shannon Anastopolous, Owasso; Richard Kreisel, Warsaw, MO.

Restricted A Class: Dalton Cole, Pryor; Denny Felker, Jr., Webb City, MO; Kevin Harris, Wilton, CA; Andrew Felker, Joplin, MO; Alex Decamp, Locust Grove; Cody Baker, Lone Jack, MO; Tanner Mullens, Andale, KS; Sam Kimmel, Mentone, IN; Travis Harris, Owasso; Tyler Edwards, Salina.

Junior Sprints: Mitch Faccinto, Hanford, CA; Jimmy Wood, Monticello, IN; Myles Moos, Lincoln, IL; Justin Sanders, Prunedale, CA; Jarrett Cathey, Paducah, KY; Morgan Moore, Bethany; Cameron Hagin, Broken Arrow; April Cathey, Paducah, KY; Barbie Kimmel, Mentone, IN; Blake Hahn, Sapulpa.

KARTS

Junior I: Darrin Zomer, Canton, SD; Nate Carruth, Ames, IA; Jarin Cass, Elowah, TN; Jake White, Kansas City, MO; Cody Burks, Halls, TN; Austin Allen, Goddard, KS; Ryan Luza, Cypress, TX; Drake Helgeson, Geneva, WI; Jordan Krug, Omaha, NE; Jake Blackhurst, Farmington, IL.

Junior II: Will Holder, Bartlett, TN; Joey Lile, Higginsville, MO; Charles Wood, Missouri City, TX; Skylar Prochaska, Lakefield, MN; Lucas Wallace, Albany, KY; Justin Johnson, Olathe, KS; Patrick Mahnken, Fulton, MO; Jeremy Lile, Higginsville, MO; Stephen Applegate, Greenwood, IN; Barnaby Simon, Tyler, TX.

Super Junior II: Mahnken; Holder; Wallace; Casey Povelones, Danville, IL; Adam Stuart, Wichita, KS; Johnny Whitman, DePere, WI; Simon; Prochaska; Thor Anderson, Bondurant, IA; J. Johnson.

Stock Light: Jody Krug, Omaha, NE; Aaron Marrant, Orrick, MO; Mike Halliburton, Columbia, MO; James Murphy, Kansas City, MO; Kyle Lentz, Green Bay, WI; Chad Waller, Traer, IA; Josh Most, Red Oak, IA; Darrell Johnson, Vine Grove, KY; Chris Marrant, Richmond, MO; Ronnie Binkley, Calvert City, KY.

First Stock Medium: Krug; Waller; A. Marrant; Kevin Weldon, Newburgh, IN; Don Young, Bartlett, TN; Nick Higdon, Big Clifty, KY; Binkley; Bryant Goldsmith, Corning, IA; Buck Verbeck, Udall, KS; Andrew Peters, Greentown, IN.

Second Stock Medium: Lentz; Josh Most, Red Oak, IA; Ken Murphy, Kansas City, KS; Mike Dickerson, West Lafayette, OH; Kenny Lovins, Blytheville, AR; Kyle Towns, Dubberly, LA; Travis Smock, Independence, IA; Brent Rowell, Atoka, TN; Allen Johnston, Burlington, IA; Jeremy Rasmussen, Bentonville, AR.

Stock Heavy: Waller; C. Marrant; Daniel Mabry, Saltville, MS; A. Marrant; Lovins; Justin Lindsay, Columbus, MS; Weldon; Byron Parrish, Decatur, IL; Jay Schares, Dunkerton, IA; Craig Noble, Farmer City, IL.

Briggs Animal Medium: Halliburton; Young; Parrish; Tyler Stevens, Searcy, AR; Dane Williams, Charlotte, NC; Lentz; Jason Vetter, North Mankato, MN; Brent Reeves, Albany, KY; Peters; Schares.

Briggs Animal Heavy: Krug; Byron Parris, Decatur, AL; Dickerson; Reeves; Lentz; D. Williams; Corey Nelson, Eugene, MO; Randy Nesbitt, Danville, IL; Schares; Carl Smith, Hockley, TX.

Blue Wazoom: Waller; A. Marrant; C. Marrant; Evan Suggs, Scotts Valley, CA; Justin Becker, Holton, KS; Rasmussen; Zach Clark, Olathe, KS; Jake Williams, Terrell, TX; Wesley Loftin, Alexander, AR; Tyler Wolff, Elkins, AR.

Yamaha KT100: Jamie Ferrell, Des Moines, IA; Carey Forsyth, Carlisle, IA; Chuck Clark, Carbon, IN; Chris Parkinson, Gladstone, MO; Jerry Janssen, Pella, IA; Tommy Davis III, Des Moines, IA; J.R. Wolver, Oskaloosa, IA; Chris Birky, Foolsland, IL; Eric Vanderploeg, Altoona, IA; Jeremy Hills, Des Moines, IA.

Run What Ya Brung: Ferrell; Rick Sullivan, Clinton, IL; C. Clark; Danny Barker, Kansas City, KS; Michael Floyd, Holt Summit, MO; Davis; Vanderploeg; Greg Nelson, Decatur, IL; Janssen; Russ Hall, Des Moines, IA.

QUADS

Open Pro: Mitch Reynolds, Greenbrier, AR; Brad Covington, Batesville, AR; Jon Reineccius, Stanchfield, MN; Daryl Rath, Hutchinson, MN; Dustin Clark, Eldon, IA; Gregg Bakker, Sioux Falls, SD; Drew Hillian, Beebe, AR; Micah Schliemann, Hartford, SD; Danny McGraw, Hale, MO; Brent Kuik, Sioux Falls, SD.

250cc Pro: Covington; Rath; Derrick Clark, Eldon, IA; Schliemann; Shane Smith, Chillicothe, MO; Dustin Clark; Mitch Reynolds, Greenbrier, AR; Bakker; McGraw; Daniel Hillian, Beebe, AR.

Open Amateur: Thomas Brown, Sanger, TX; Tim Macrae, Tulsa; Jason McAllister, Hutchinson, KS; Jeff Roberts, Bevier, MO; Chad Olson, North Branch, MN; Stephen Groder, Tulsa; Coy Burton, Clever, MO; Kale Chronister, Ozark, MO; Colt Champ, Sand Springs; Andrew Bullard, Kansas City, MO.

250cc Amateur: Eric Vanderploeg, Altoona, IA; Kale Chronister, Ozark, MO; Macrae; Todd Harrell, Coweta; Ron Pegram, Ankeny, IA; Bullard; Jensen Roberts, Claremore; Groder; Jeff Roberts, Bevier, MO; Thomas Brown, Sanger, TX.

Slinger's Best Honored at 2004 Season Banquet

by Lanae Weyer

SLINGER, WI, January 9 -- Slinger Super Speedway completed its 57th year of motorsports during the 2004 season and awarded its drivers over \$60,000 in cash and contingency products during its recent annual awards banquet. Wayne Erickson and his wife Sandy have maintained the operated the facility for the past 31 years.

Brad Mueller won his second consecutive late model track championship at Slinger Super Speedway in 2004, and his award presentation highlighted the evening. Other champions honored included Dale Prunty in the Midwest modified division, Gary LaMonte in the Midwest Sportsman class, and Shane Becker in the figure-8s.

In late model action in 2004, 12 different drivers took checkered flags in feature events, and a total of 30 drivers met the minimum requirements to qualify for post-season awards. Mueller wrapped up his second straight title, with his season including winning the Al Schill, Jr., Memorial. He placed in the top five 14 times and won two trophy dashes while leading the division by setting fast time on eight occasions. He successfully defended his 2003 championship by a 1059-1018 point margin over runner-up Dave Feiler.

Feiler's year included winning the Alan Kulwicki Memorial and the Race of Champions. He also finished in the top five ten times and twice more in the top ten, while setting three fast times and winning three trophy dashes, and his efforts also earned him late model rookie-of-the-year honors.

Third-place finisher Eric Fransen scored a runner-up finish in the Triple Crown event and three other popular wins. He also earned eight top-five finishes and one trophy dash win. Car owner Sonya DelCamp accepted the award for Fransen.

Lowell Bennett ended 2004 fourth in late model points after winning four features, including his third Slinger Nationals win. He earned ten top-five finishes and one quick time honor.

Multi-time track champion Al Schill captured one feature win during 2004, along with a third-place finish in the Triple Crown championship, and placed in the top five eight times while setting one fast time to finish fifth in the standings.

David Prunty placed in the top five six times and won one feature and one trophy dash, and was the fastest qualifier on three nights, to finish the year sixth in points ahead of Austin Konetski. Rounding out the late model top ten were Dave Teske, who moved up four spots from last year to eighth; young Travis Dassow in ninth; and Conrad Morgan, whose nine top-ten finishes landed him tenth.

Mark Bitzan earned the hard luck award, while Chad Barker took home the honors for the Best Crew Award in the late model division.

Dale Prunty led the Midwest mods with 15 top-five finishes and four feature wins, including during the Race of Champions. He also won two trophy dashes and set fast time seven times to become the 2004 champion.

Finishing second in the points, Wes Biswell scored nine top-five finishes, includ-

ing four feature wins, and six trophy dash wins. Jason Feyereisen earned one checkered flag, scored nine top-fives and won four trophy dashes to finish third in points. Jeff Holtz and Dan Miller completed the top five.

In the Midwest Sportsman division, champ Lamonte won five features, including the Labor Day Special, the Alan Kulwicki Memorial, and the Al Schill, Jr., Memorial, and he finished in the top five nine times. He led the division with eight fast times and edged out James Swan, 1277-1251, for the season title. Swan also had a very impressive record, including five fast times, two trophy dash wins and four feature wins.

Josh Bauer earned five feature wins and four fast times to take third place overall. Mike Graczkowski and Colin Banke made up the remainder of the top five.

The figure-8 division saw four different drivers in Victory Lane in 2004. Becker took home the championship honors with four feature wins during the season.

A championship was not awarded for the Slinger Bee division, which grew in both numbers of participants and fan interest in 2004. Joseph Bentfield recorded the most wins in the division, with seven.

The Thunderstock division was a new addition to the speedway in 2004 and proved to be very popular. Although a championship was not awarded, it was noted that two drivers tied with three wins a piece to pace the division - Mark Kissinger and Joe DeStefano, Jr.

Focus Midget Drivers to Compete for Special Honor in '05

MILWAUKEE, WI, December 27 -- Officials of the National Midget Driver of the Year Championship have announced that a similar program has been set in place for drivers competing in Ford Focus Midget Racing for the 2005 season and beyond.

"With the growth of Ford Focus midget racing, and the many inquiries we have received about setting up a similar program, the timing (for such a program) was perfect," NMDoY director and founder announced Bryan Gapinski. "We received a great deal of corporate interest about the program at the recent Performance Racing Industry trade show." Further information on the award program will be released shortly.

Having just completed its sixth season, the National Midget Driver of the Year committee awards the honor to the top midget driver in the country based on a uniform points system for all 12 series. Bobby East was named the 2004 honoree, while prior winners include Jason Leffler (1999), Kasey Kahne (2000), Tracy Hines ('01) and Aaron Fike ('02, '03).

The first two events counting towards the 2005 National Midget and the Focus Midget Driver of the Year championships were held on December 29-30 at the Allen County Memorial Expo Center in Ft. Wayne, IN.

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Schatz Rolls to Win in WoO 'Down Under' Finale

GRANVILLE, NSW, Australia, January 16 -- Donny Schatz parlayed his momentum from his 2004 season-ending victory at Las Vegas, NV, to a victory in the finale of Outlaws Down Under II Sunday.

With light rain falling before and during the A-main feature at Parramatta City Raceway, Schatz dove low on lap 5 to slip past Danny Lasoski and into the lead, and he never gave it back as he navigated traffic, cautions and even a red flag to win the 40-lap race by 12 car-lengths.

Lasoski held on to second, followed by Aussie native Kerry Madsen, WoO star Daryn Pittman, and "Pennsylvania Posse" legend Fred Rahmer.

The stars of the first two nights, Madsen and Lasoski, raced side-by-side on the first lap before Madsen moved in front. A lap later Lasoski made the same move to go in front before a caution flew for Jason Sides and Mark Wells, who spun.

Schatz, who started third, slid past Madsen on the outside before locking in on Lasoski and going to the front on lap 5.

As Schatz was driving away from the field, Tim Shaffer and

Steve Kinser swapped fourth before a red flag came out on lap 21 for Trevor Green's flip. He was uninjured and later rejoined the field after making repairs.

When the race resumed, Kinser and Madsen exchanged third as Schatz drove out to a huge advantage. But as the race wound down, Kinser faded as first Pittman went by him low and then Rahmer passed him with a similar move.

The World of Outlaws Sprint Series returns to the United States to kick off its 2005 schedule by making its first appearance at Volusia Speedway Park on February 11 and 13.

RESULTS

D-Main: Martin Lawes, Ian Madsen, Mitchell Dumesny.

Heat 1: Paul McMahan, Joey Saldana, Skip Jackson.

Heat 2: Shane Stewart, Tim Kaeding, Craig Kinser.

Heat 3: Tim Shaffer, Trevor Green, Max Dumesny.

Heat 4: Brooke Tatnell, Jason Sides, Jason Statler.

C-Main: Craig Dollansky, Randy Hannagan, Luch Monte.

Dash: Kerry Madsen, Danny Lasoski, Donny Schatz.

B-Main: Bruce White, Brian Paulus, Mark Wells.

A-Main: Schatz, Lasoski, K. Madsen, Daryn Pittman, Fred Rahmer, Kevin Swindell, Shaffer, Steve Kinser, Jason Meyers, Stewart.

Lasoski Captures Victory at 'Outlaws Down Under'

GRANVILLE, NSW, Australia, January 15 -- With 22 laps to go in night two at Outlaws Down Under II, World of Outlaws Sprint Series veteran Danny Lasoski grabbed the lead in the A-main and drove off with a victory.

"The Dude" went low in turns 2 and 4 at Parramatta City Raceway and slipped past Aussie natives Trevor Green and Kerry Madsen to take the lead and eventually win by half a lap. Madsen wound up second, followed by Outlaws stars Donny Schatz, Steve Kinser and Jason Meyers.

Tim Shaffer started on the pole in the A-main, but he gave the lead to Green in the first lap. Then Kevin Swindell's car hit the tire of a fellow competitor and sent him into the frontstretch wall; he was able to walk away.

A lap later, after Lasoski passed Schatz and Meyers low, the red flag came out

when Tim Kaeding flipped several times after jumping the cushion. Fortunately, he also walked away uninjured.

After that, the feature settled down and the front-runners stretched out their advantage.

RESULTS

Qualifying: Jason Meyers, 11.894 secs.

D-Main 1: Martin Lawes, Ian Madsen, James Thompson.

D-Main 2: Rod Bright, Mark Blyton, Mitchell Dumesny.

Heat 1: Jason Sides, Marty Perovich, Meyers.

Heat 2: Paul Sides, Trevor Green, Mark Wells.

Heat 3: Tim Kaeding, Daryn Pittman, Kerry Madsen.

Heat 4: Steve Kinser, Shane Stewart, Paul McMahan.

C-Main: Joey Saldana, Jason Statler, Randy Hannagan.

Dash 1: Shaffer, K. Madsen, Meyers.

Dash 2: Green, McMahan, Danny Lasoski.

B-Main: Craig Kinser, Kevin Swindell, Fred Rahmer.

A-Main: Lasoski, K. Madsen, Donny Schatz, S. Kinser, Meyers, Sammy Swindell, McMahan, Stewart, Bruce White, Saldana.

Australian Madsen Dominates Opening Night of 'Outlaws Down Under'

GRANVILLE, NSW, Australia, January 13 -- In a star-studded opener to Outlaws Down Under II, Australian Kerry Madsen stole the show and the victory.

After a fierce back-and-forth duel through lapped traffic with World of Outlaws ace Danny Lasoski, Madsen dove to the inside groove and drove off with the win at Parramatta City Raceway. It marks the second year in a row that Madsen captured the checkered flag on the first of three nights of racing that features the World of Outlaws Sprint Series against the top racers from Australia.

Lasoski, a former Outlaws champion, held on for second, and was followed by Series

mates Paul McMahan, Shane Stewart and Steve Kinser, the defending Series and Outlaws Down Under champion.

In all, seven Australians reached the A-main in a field that started with 70 cars in time trials. Erin Crocker, who last season became the first woman in WoO history to win an A-main, finished ninth, while Series legend Sammy Swindell was 14th.

The scariest moment of the night came in the final dash, when WoO racer Randy Hannagan and Aussie Adrian Maher crashed in turn 3. Maher flipped end-over-end several times before walking away and going to a hospital to be checked out.

Q&A: Kvapil Ready for First Cup Run

DAYTONA BEACH, FL -- Travis Kvapil, the 28-year-old former NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series champion from Janesville, WI, will drive for Penske Racing South on the NASCAR Nextel Cup circuit in 2005 and compete for Rookie of the Year honors. Kvapil was recently involved in a question-and-answer media session, and he gave some insight to several in-depth topics.

Q: You drove in three Cup races in 2004. How different was that from driving in the Truck Series?

Kvapil: It was quite a bit different. The races are longer and more pit stops are involved in the Cup Series. The biggest difference I noticed was how important the team aspect of it was. In the Truck Series you could have a 16-second pit stop and maintain your position, or you might even gain a spot or two. In the Cup Series, if you have a slow stop or you're off a little bit you're really going to lose positions. The competition is so close. You could be running 25th on the track and running similar lap times to the guys running in the top five. The depth of the competition and the importance of every member of the team make Cup a lot tougher.

Q: You qualified fifth in your first Cup start at Martinsville in October. Is qualifying a big part of your game?

Kvapil: Throughout my short-track career and running late models I always thought I was a great qualifier. In the Truck Series over four years I only had one pole. I don't think I'm one of the great qualifiers like Ryan Newman, blazing the laps off every week, but I feel like I do a good job in the race communicating with the team, telling them the adjustments that need to be made to the race car. I guess that's where I think I excel with my performance - during the race, making the car faster and being there at the end of 500 miles.

Q: Throughout your racing career, have you had to do a lot of hands-on work with the car?

Kvapil: Definitely. As I was running late models and short tracks, it was me and my stepfather (Richard). A couple of my buddies would come over and help work on the car, but I was the main one building the car and repairing it, along with my stepfather. I was very hands-on, and I think that's been a big asset for me getting to Nextel Cup racing - knowing the nuts and bolts of a race car and what makes it work and what makes it go faster on the race track.

Q: Will your stepfather be involved with you now on the race team?

Kvapil: I'm not sure, but I know he'd love to be involved. We worked side by side from when I started at the age of 16 until I started in the Truck Series when I was 24. We went to the race track together every Friday and Saturday night. I'm sure he'd like to be involved, and

maybe we can find a spot for him."

Q: Who's your crew chief?

Kvapil: Shane Wilson. I knew him a little bit from the Truck Series, but I don't really know him that well. I know he's been with Hendrick Motorsports and the Orleans truck team. He's won a bunch of races and he's been successful. I'm excited to get a chance to work with Shane. I think we've got a lot of potential together and I think our personalities are similar. I think we'll be able to get along very well. I think we're getting started a little early. I know we've got Daytona testing coming up in January, but I think we're heading to Lakeland, FL, next week to do some short-track testing. It'll be nice to get a jump on the 2005 season.

Q: After winning the Truck Series title in 2003, was 2004 a tough season?

Kvapil: We had a pretty big mountain to climb in 2004 with a new manufacturer and a new team and a new owner. We had a lot to overcome. My expectations were to go out and win the championship last year in the Truck Series, but we fell a little short of that. We won a couple of races and picked up a pole, but the last part of the year we started to struggle and dropped out of the championship chase. It was a bit of a disappointment to win the championship and come back the next year and finish eighth in the points, but getting those two wins were great.

Q: Why do you think Roger Penske picked you to drive for him?

Kvapil: I think he believes in me and thinks I can get that 77 car in victory lane and be a good spokesperson for Penske-Jasper Racing and (sponsor) Kodak. I want to make the 77 car like the 2 and 12 cars - a car to contend with every week. We ran a few races last year, and apparently he liked the way I race.

Q: Have you had a chance to talk to teammates Rusty Wallace and Ryan Newman yet?

Kvapil: Ryan and Rusty were really good to me at the three races I did last year. They offered free advice and any information I was looking for they were right there to help me out. You couldn't ask for two better teammates. You've got a young guy like Ryan who's doing a great job and someone like Rusty who's got a bunch of experience and a number of years under his belt. I think I've got both sides of the coin to draw from. Hopefully we can all work together and make all three cars successful next year.

Q: Will Buddy Baker be working with you?

Kvapil: I'm not sure what his role will be yet. I know the little bit of testing I've done, he's been there offering advice. I imagine he'll be there. I look forward to working with him. He was a very successful driver with a ton of experience, and he knows what it takes to go fast around the race track."

Q: It looks like Kyle Busch will be your main competition for the rookie of the year honors. Will that title be your main objective?

Kvapil: I feel like the 77 team will be a contender to win the rookie title (this) year, and I'd have to say that's probably my number one goal for 2005. I think we've got a great shot at it. I know we've got the team and sponsor and people behind me to go ahead and do that. I want to finish in the top 20 or top 15 in points. Anything better than that would be great. I want to win a race next year and be in contention to win races, and I know I'll have the equipment to do it. I feel like as a driver I can do it. I'm sure there will be a bit of a learning curve and things to get used to, but I want to win next year, and I'll be disappointed if we don't.

Q: Do you think you'll have a lot of adjustments to make to prepare for a full Cup season?

Kvapil: I've only run three times, and I really don't have a lot of preconceived ideas of what the car should feel like or drive like. With some of the rule changes and new bodies, I think coming in as a new driver will be a good thing. I'm not going to know what the car felt like last year. I'll just take the '05 Dodge Charger and try to make it fast. I think my driving style is actually going to be more beneficial to Cup racing than it was in truck racing. I've always been a driver who wants to be there at the end of the race. I like to work during the race to make it faster and come on strong at the end. The races are longer in the Cup Series, and you get more opportunities to work on the car versus in the Truck Series. Sometimes you only got one or two pit stops to make adjustments (in the trucks), and if you didn't get it right you couldn't make it to the front.

Q: Will you feel more comfortable at one size track or another?

Kvapil: I don't know if one is better than the other. I think I've got a real good feel for the short tracks. As a former late model driver I think I can go out and run really good on the short tracks, but I think I can win on the superspeedways as well. I finished second at Daytona the last two years in my truck. I won at the two-mile track at Michigan last year, and I've won at Texas in the past, so I feel like I can do well at all of them. We're going to do a lot of testing and try to be as prepared as we can.

Q: Do you feel, being tabbed to drive for Penske in the Cup Series, that you've just received the ultimate Christmas present?

Kvapil: This is more than I could ever really dream of. It's huge. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I'm going to do all I can to make it successful. I feel really blessed to get this opportunity.

Kenseth to Return to WIR in '05

by Kevin Ramsell

KAUKAUNA, WI -- Roy Kenseth, father of 2003 NASCAR champion and 2004 IROC champion Matt Kenseth, has announced that he has formed his own racing promotion company called RK Race Promotion. He will be focusing on special event races throughout the Midwest, including some that will feature his son.

The first event to be held under RK Race Promotion's label will take place on Tuesday, July 12, at Wisconsin International Raceway in Kaukauna. Details of this event are still being finalized, but Kenseth has confirmed that Matt will compete in this event along with other

NASCAR stars. This will be Matt Kenseth's first racing appearance at WIR since he won back-to-back track championships there in 1994-'95.

Roy Kenseth's strong business background includes owning a furniture store and a movie theatre. For the past two years he was the promoter at Madison International Speedway until August 2004. Roy, along with his daughter Kelley, currently operates the Matt Kenseth Fan Club Headquarters just outside Cambridge.

For information regarding sponsorship and group opportunities for the July 12 show, contact Roy Kenseth at (608) 209-1188.

Luxemburg Speedway Sets Awards Banquet Date

LUXEMBURG, WI -- Top drivers will be honored at the 2004 Luxemburg Speedway awards banquet, slated for Saturday, February 5, at the Rendezvous Pleasure Palace in Nueren.

Champions in the IMCA modified, stock car and hobby stock, and sport four divisions will be crowned. Drivers finishing in the top ten in points in the mods and stock cars will receive awards, while the top five points finishers in the hobby stocks and sport fours will also be honored. The program will be highlighted track photographer John Garniss' slide show, recapping the season's activities.

A cash bar is scheduled for 5 pm, with dinner at 6 and the awards ceremony to follow. A disc jockey will spin tunes afterward, and karaoke will also be a part of the program. Tickets are \$18.00 per person and are available by sending a check payable to Luxemburg Speedway, to P.O. Box 485, Denmark, WI 54208.

Rendezvous Pleasure Palace is located four miles south of the race track on County N in the town of Luxemburg. From Green Bay it is approximately 11 miles east via County Highway V, then north on 'N' approximately one mile. For more information, call (920) 845-2066.

The season opens

Friday night, April 29, at 7 pm, and programs will run weekly on Friday nights through Labor Day weekend. For further details on Luxemburg Speedway, call (920) 863-8446.

CRA to Sanction NSTS at Rockford

SALEM, IN, January 7 -- CRA Super Series and Rockford Speedway officials have announced that the Series will sanction the 40th annual National Short Track Championships 250-lap main event at the Speedway in 2005.

This will be the Series' third appearance at the historic quarter-mile facility located in Rockford, IL, and the third consecutive appearance in the NSTC. The Series racers will practice and qualify on Saturday, September 24, and the 250-lap main event will take place on Sunday, September 25.

Last season's NSTC saw a record number of CRA cars participate, as 40 competitors took qualifying times. Nathan Haseleu captured the fast time, and after qualifying races and a last chance event, Brad Mueller led the first 220 laps of the main event, but Eddie Hoffman took the lead for good when Mueller slipped up and tapped the wall lightly.

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Promoters' Workshop Series to Continue at New Location

GREEN LAKE, WI, January 2 -- After chalking up excellent attendance during its third largest Workshop ever held at Reno, *Racing Promotion Monthly* will present its 32nd RPM Promoters Workshops Series at a new location - the Orlando Marriott Lake Mary - on February 10-12 in Lake Mary, FL.

Stewart Doty, chairman of the Workshops, recently pointed out that the Orlando Marriott Lake Mary is close to tracks hosting Speedweek events and offers excellent services and amenities and nearby shopping and recreational opportunities. About a half-hour by interstate highway from Orlando International Airport, and close to Volusia Speedway Park, New Smyrna Speedway and Daytona International Speedway, the site of the Promoters' Workshop is halfway between Daytona Beach and Orlando on Interstate 4 and is centrally located halfway between the two nearby short tracks.

Speedweek races begin just before the Workshop, offering promoters a midwinter working vacation. The East

Date, Time Changed for ARPY Presentations

GREEN LAKE, WI, January 17 -- The *Racing Promoters Monthly* Auto Racing Promoter of the Year award, presented for the last 20 years at the Daytona Awards Dinner during the RPM Promoters' Workshops, will be presented this year during the breakfast ceremonies on opening morning at the Workshop.

The 29th ARPY award, regional ARPYs, *National Speed Sport News* award for outstanding short-track event, and Stew Reamer Service Award for service to short-track racing will be presented Thursday, February 10. The breakfast will begin at 9 am. Workshops keynote speaker Chris Economaki will make his remarks during the awards presentation, which will conclude at 11 am.

Bay Raceway's Winternationals begin February 7, Volusia Raceway Park's Raceweeks starts February 8, and the New Smyrna Speedway's World Series of Asphalt Stock Car Racing begins February 11.

Featured Workshop presentations include keynote remarks by racing newspaper publisher Chris Economaki and Vermont track promoter Tom Curley. Others who will share ideas with promoters are Auto Racing Promoters of the Year Nadine and Bob Strauss and dirt track prep

expert Ed Davis, and a special session will showcase ideas of generation-next promoters Todd Fisher, Brandon Hutchison and Roger Slack. In all, there will be 19 sessions covering all facets of short track operation.

The Lake Mary meeting is the 89th produced by RPM during its 32-year run. More than 1,400 track operators, their employees, and industry leaders attended last year's Workshops. More information and registration materials are available from RPM at (920) 294-0830.

Repeat Nominees Dominate ARPY Ballots

GREEN LAKE, WI, January 2 -- All but one candidate for the 29th Auto Racing Promoter of the Year (ARPY) award, chosen by promoters in balloting held by *Racing Promotion Monthly*, were previously nominated. Two regional nominees already received their industry's highest honor, and five nominees share 22 previous regional awards.

The slate includes one first-time nominee; two operate paved tracks and six dirt tracks, and four nominees operate half-mile tracks. Four are sanctioned and four operate independently.

Leading the nominees is 2002 ARPY winner Lanny Edwards, a seven-time nominee. Robert Lawton, who was the 1992 Promoter of the Year, joins Edwards. The selection of Edwards and Lawton brings to five the promoters who have been re-nominated after winning the award.

Other regional nominees include Frank Plessinger, Hagerstown (MD) Speedway (fourth nomination); John Padjen, Silver Dollar

(CA) Speedway (third); Tom Curley, Thunder Road (VT) International Speedbowl (third); Dick Chrysler, Kil-Kare (OH) Speedway & Dragway (second); and Andy Stone and Ted Austad, Oglethorpe (GA) Speedway (second consecutive). Bob and Susan Allen, who operate Arlington and Redwood (MN) Speedways - two fairgrounds dirt tracks in Minnesota - received their first nomination.

The 29th ARPY winner will be revealed during the 32nd RPM Promoters Workshops at the Orlando Marriott Lake Mary, Lake Mary, FL. The ARPY is short track racing's most prestigious award, presented each year since 1976 after voting by promoters. Voting is conducted in two phases: a preliminary ballot in the newsletter to nominate candidates in eight regions, and a second ballot including the eight Regional Promoters of the Year.

More information on the nominees and the award ceremonies is available from *Racing Promotion Monthly* at (920) 294-0830.

Eldora's USAC Tradition Lives On

ROSSBURG, OH, January 14 -- Tradition and a rich history of event promotion are among the trademarks that have allowed Eldora Speedway to set itself apart as an industry leader among grassroots racing. Tony Stewart, who purchased the venerable speed plant from Earl Baltes this past November, is keenly aware of that fact and has vowed to "continue the Eldora legacy."

One of the primary moves in that direction was to continue Eldora's involvement of the United States Auto Club within the track's 2005 schedule of events. The Indianapolis-based sanctioning body, which will be celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout this season, has been a mainstay on the Eldora menu since 1962, when its sprint division first invaded the southwestern Ohio half-mile clay oval. Stan Bowman won that inaugural event, and since then USAC's touring National sprint division has competed 162 times here, with 63 different drivers winning. Jack Hewitt sits firmly atop the all-time win list at 13 triumphs; no active driver is within striking distance of that mark.

USAC midgets first appeared on the Eldora scene in 1964, and since then have battled there 35 times, with a competitive record of 21 different winners. The late Rich Vogler heads up that list with five wins, while Dave Darland is knocking on the door with his four victories, which includes at least one in each of the past two years.

Impressive victors on the midget roll include Stewart himself, along with fellow NASCAR stalwarts Jeff Gordon, Ken Schrader and Kasey Kahne, as well as Indy 500 veteran Stan Fox.

Eldora always provides a test for the Silver Crown entrants, a division that normally competes on tracks of one mile in length or longer. Yet, since their 1981 Eldora debut at the initial Four Crown, the Silver Crown pilots have competed a total of 24 times here, with an even dozen drivers reaching the checkered flag first. Hewitt also sits atop that list with eight wins to his credit.

This season's slate includes six USAC visits, involving three National divisions - sprints, midgets and Silver Crown cars. Earmarked as sprint invasions are the Midwestern opener for USAC on April 2, the 11th annual "Border Wars" on April 30, a visit on May 29, the "Buckeye Nationals" on June 18, the \$50,000-to-win "Mopar Thunder" on August 6, and the "Four Crown Nationals" over the weekend of September 23-24.

The USAC midgets will visit twice in 2005. The first stop will be part of a twin bill with the sprints during the Buckeye Nationals, while the second outing will be during the September Four Crown, which will also include the Silver Crown cars in their only Ohio appearance.

Stewart looks at the USAC relationship with Eldora Speedway as a valuable con-

tribution to the continuation of the track's steep tradition.

The complete 2005 slate of events for Eldora Speedway will be released soon and will include many other sanctioning bodies that have contributed greatly to Eldora's overall success, including the World of Outlaws, the All Star Circuit of Champions and the United Midwestern Promoters.

14-, 15-Year-Olds Allowed to Race IMCA Hobbies in '05

VINTON, IA, December 20 -- Fourteen- and 15-year-old drivers will be allowed to compete in the IMCA hobby stock class beginning in the 2005 season.

Those drivers cannot, however, race on any track bigger than a 3/8th-mile. They will also be required to submit a notarized consent form, signed by both parents or legal guardians, as well as a copy of their birth certificate, a list of the tracks they plan to race at and a resume detailing their previous racing experience.

IMCA previously had not allowed drivers under the age of 16 to compete in any sanctioned event.

"We decided to allow 14- and 15-year-olds in the hobby stock class because it is basically a beginning division, heavily OEM in its rules," explained IMCA vice-president of operations Brett Root. "This is something we have talked to our (insurance) provider about for several years.

"We are reserving the right to refuse license applications from drivers younger than 16. They cannot compete until their application is approved and will be taken from race results should they attempt to do so."

All license fees paid for by IMCA competitors for 2005 include a \$50,000 excess medical policy, with a \$5,000 deductible, and a \$5,000 accidental death, dismemberment and paralysis policy, which provides coverage only for incidents that occur during sanctioned events. Each is in effect from January 1 to December 31, 2005. Actual terms and conditions are available to member drivers from K & K Insurance.

Vukovich Book a Definitive Record and a Great Read

by Jerry Dorich

CHICAGO, IL -- Like other Bill Vukovich fans, we had long hoped that former Indy 500 yearbook publisher Carl Hungness would come out with Angelo Angelopoulos' definitive book on Vukovich. Well, the wait is over - but the definitive Vukovich book has been written by Bob Gates.

Gates, we admit, kind of snuck up on us with his book. We should have expected it, because Gates previously has written an abundance of articles about Vukovich and racing in the Fifties. Now he has put it all together with not only a definitive Vukovich book, but a darned good one - in fact, a superb book.

There are some books that are so interesting, so well-written, so out-and-out good that you can go to any page at random, start reading, and become totally engrossed. "Vukovich, An Inspiring Story of American Achievement," is that kind of book.

We're an avid Vukovich fan, but the book's merits overcome any predisposition we may have had toward it. It would have been excellent if it had been written about the dullest stroker who ever ran Indy. Gates does an excellent job of gathering his material and putting it together into a meaningful, smooth-flowing narrative. Even if you don't share our liking of all things Vukovich, you will find plenty of racing lore and interesting insider information to make the book worthwhile. Couple that with skilled writing, and you get a definite "page-turner."

You don't need to be a Vukovich fan to enjoy Gates' book. A general knowledge of Vuky's career is helpful, but it's not necessary, because Gates covers just about anything we could think of regarding Vuky and his career. Gates goes beyond that, though, and delves deeply into Vuky's personal life. A Depression-era child who was forced to work to support his siblings, Vuky later was absolutely devoted to his wife and children. And despite the apparently bitter on-track rivalry, Vuky was friends with Jack McGrath. Gates covers all this, and the result is about a person who was not only interesting as a racer, but also a mensch, a "person with worth and dignity, one who can be respected."

For those who are Vukovich addicts, there

are loads of previously unknown facts and incidents. We can't think of a single interesting Vuky story Gates missed, and he came up with a lot of previously unknown ones. For instance, we knew that, despite having been of draft age, Vuky had not served in any of the armed services during WWII. We considered it a failing and often wondered why. Gates dug up the fact that Vuky had tried to join the army but was turned down due to a severe injury suffered in a 1940 Bakersfield midget crash that left him permanently unable to lift one arm above his shoulder. Instead, Vuky did his part in the war effort by working at a mobile unit in Riverside, CA, that repaired trucks, tanks and other equipment.

Gates writes extensively of the years before Indy, when Vuky was a absolute terror in California midget racing. Vuky was so good that in a different time he would have been at Indy ten years earlier. Sadly, in our times, he probably would be headed to NASCAR.

Gates also covers the career of Bill Jr. Without being maudlin, Gates writes powerfully of the anguish suffered by Bill Jr. and his wife Joyce over the sad death of their only son, Bill Vukovich III, in a racing accident. Like Earnhardt's accident, this was also one that didn't appear very serious - but was.

The book has good balance. There's not too much of any one thing, yet there's plenty to reflect on and enjoy. The publishers added an appendix that contained material from Rex Dean's website devoted exclusively and extensively to Vuky's fatal wreck but tastefully omitted publishing any of Dean's often morbid photos of the destroyed Hopkins Special. The book didn't need them, because its 320 pages contain 260 excellent photos, 72 in color. The book is packaged in a very attractive cover showing the Fuel Injection Special as it appears today in the Indianapolis Speedway Museum.

The book is available from Witness Productions, Box 34, Marshall, IN 47859, or by phone (MC and VISA accepted) at (765) 597-2487. The price is \$30 for the softcover edition and \$40 for the hardcover version, postpaid. It's a must for your racing library and a great read.

Elko Announces 'User-Friendly' '05 Schedule

ELKO, MN -- Elko Speedway officials have released a tentative 2005 season schedule designed to allow competitors, crews and fans alike some "family downtime." The schedule includes two weekends where the four major speedway divisions will not compete. The schedule also includes special activities and nights to celebrate the 40th year of track operation.

Highlighting the celebration will be a special visit to the track by NASCAR legends Bobby Allison and Ned Jarrett on May 21. The track will also salute all of the former greats who have competed at the facility over its first 40 years.

Plans are being formulated

to host another NASCAR Drivers' Night in '05. The speedway hosted stars Bill Elliott, Sterling Marlin, Greg Biffle, Kenny Wallace and Travis Kvapil in 2004.

The Super Summer Series will return in 2005. The three-night series featuring twin 40-lap features for super late models was very successful in its inaugural year, and officials will look to grow the series into a premier Midwest racing event.

A four-race Challenge Series has been added to the schedule for 2005, featuring the Elko Sportsmen and the Mid-American Stock Car Series. Separate points will be awarded in each of the four

races, and the overall champion will receive a trip for two to the 2006 Daytona 500.

Speedway officials have also included four of the popular "Eve of Destruction" nights. However, unlike in the past, two of the four "Eves" are set for Saturday nights.

The season kicks off on Saturday, April 23, with the all-new "Enduromania 240." The enduro will feature two divisions including full-sized enduro cars and a separate Hornet enduro. The schedule calls for the season to conclude with the second annual Thunder Car Nationals on Saturday, October 1.



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2004 Badger Kart Club Champions



Joe Schaffer - Briggs Heavy



Vince Heywood - Briggs Jr. Sportsman



Eric Sutcliffe - 2-Cycle Jr. Sportsman



Heidi Olsen - Briggs Lite



Ted Goad - Sr. Sportsman Heavy



Grant Hofmeister - Yamaha Jr. Can



Nic Johnsrud - Yamaha Lite and Sr. Sportsman Lite



Zack Emmons - HPV Jr.



Scott Kalish - HPV Sr. Lite



Bob Jeziorski - HPV Sr. Heavy



Brian Julien - Shifter



Robby Mueller - Briggs Animal Jr. Sportsman



Bianca Schreiber - Yamaha Jr. SSX



Gavin Hallman - Briggs Animal Jr.
(Bob Cruse photos)



Aron Scalissi - Briggs Animal Sr.



Mike Fuchs - Yamaha Heavy

Rice, Meira Sign Extensions With Rahal Letterman Racing

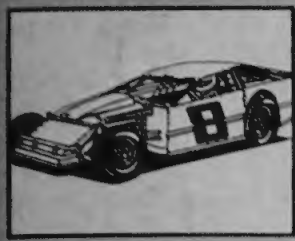
INDIANAPOLIS, IN -- Buddy Rice and Vitor Meira will remain with Rahal Letterman Racing after the team announced on December 8 multi-year contract extensions with both drivers.

Rice will continue to drive the number 15 car, while Meira remains driver of the number 17 car. They will be joined by newcomer Danica Patrick, who will drive the number 16 car in Rahal Letterman Racing's three-car IRL IndyCar Series effort.

Rice won three races in 2004, including the Indianapolis 500. Meira finished eighth in the IndyCar Series in 2004 despite running two fewer events than the rest of the top-ten drivers.

Reichert's Ramblings

Ed Reichert



On January 5, the 19th Chili Bowl began its annual four-day run at the Tulsa Expo. Promoted yearly by Emmett Hahn and Lanny Edwards, this event has turned into the "must see" racing event of the midwinter in the entire country, with race drivers and spectators from nearly every state on hand. The crowds just keep

getting bigger and bigger every year, with the final two sessions this year being complete sellouts and many people either buying pit passes or tickets for the lounge area, where they watch the action on closed-circuit TV. Imagine being in the same building where the racing is going on, yet not being able to even get to the track because of the huge crowds. With crowds of over 14,000, 250 race cars and trailers and their associated pit crews, plus a full trade show all under one roof, it's really something hard to fully describe to someone unless they've actually been there in person to experience it.

Day one found getting into the Expo Grounds a challenge, as major road construction had narrowed the entrances into only one lane going each direction. But Tulsa's Mayor, recognizing that the Chili Bowl is the second-biggest tourist draw of the entire year to the area, saw that the work was expedited, and by the final night of the race two fresh and lined lanes of pavement were available for those leaving and entering the grounds.

Eighty-three drivers attempted to qualify on night one, with only the top four in the feature moving on to the big 50-lapper on Saturday. As you might expect, under that scenario the competition was brutal, with every position contested on every lap. This led to plenty of action, which included a total of 16 rollovers for the evening - including a dubious record for Zach Chappell, who managed to flip twice in one heat race.

Eventual feature winner Josh Ford, driving one of Keith Kunz's powerhouse entries, was extremely lucky. He spun twice in his heat race, which he eventually won, but because he took a slight tap he was allowed to restart the race rather than being sent to the pits on the two-spin rule.

J.J. Yeley, who electrified the Saturday night crowd last year with his charge through the alphabet features, again dug himself a deep hole this year when he failed to finish his heat or progress on beyond the D-feature tonight.

Some of the more interesting entries tonight included two long-retired veterans, Shane Carson and Tom Bigelow, who did their first stints behind the wheel in a number of years, along with Tony Stewart's father Nelson.

Some of the best wheel-to-wheel action of the night saw Badger Midget Auto Racing Association stars Dan Boorse and Kevin Olson race hard for position. Among the BMARA drivers, Chad DeSelle had a great run that netted him a second in the first night's feature and a qualifying spot in Saturday's finale. Kevin Olson and Brandon Waelti also made the first feature, while Cody Weisensel couldn't progress past the "C". Dan Boorse also made the main, but when he rolled a front tire off the rim, it spelled doom for the 2003 champion and made his

chances of making the big show nil.

With Jack Miller missing this year's Chili Bowl for health reasons, Tony Bokhoven joined the announcing crew for the event, and the track announcer at the Knoxville Raceway quickly showed why he is considered one of the best around, as he clearly stood out above the two regular announcers of this event.

Day two saw the only injury of the weekend occur when long-time northern California open-wheel ace LeRoy Van Connett flipped in hot laps and broke his arm. The car was scratched from action and requalified the following night by Doug Hunting.

Eighty-one drivers took to the track for qualifying on night two and things went much smoother, as only six drivers managed to turn their cars upside down. The opening-night program ran well past curfew, and I'm sure the city fathers weren't too pleased, but the second night's smoother show - plus the fact that the heats were cut by two laps to eight - helped to get things done at a much earlier hour.

The youngest driver of the week in action was 14-year-old Brady Bacon, a graduate of mini-sprints who took to the speedway and did a very creditable job.

The BMARA drivers had a tough night. Neither Alex Coonan nor Buddy Luebke could manage to qualify for the main event.

Tracy Hines led all the way in a Wilke-Pak car for the win, ahead of Bud Kaeding and Tony Stewart.

Day three was the last of the qualifying attempts to set the line-ups for the alphabet features on Saturday night, and another spirited group of 88 drivers gave it their best shot at making the big show. One of the results was another dozen flips during action.

One of the most hyped entries was that of "shock-jock" Bubba the Lovesponge, driving one of Jerry Russell's entries. Bubba certainly wowed the crowd as he cracked a wheelie on the green of his heat and went into a series of wild barrel-rolls. He rode out the most violent wreck of the weekend without injury - a crash that was scary as his arms and head were flopping wildly outside the cockpit during the flip. Bubba even returned to race on Saturday.

Another new record of sorts was set in a tangle involving Steve Newman and Kevin Doty. The tangle saw Newman turned upside down, and he then set a new high for creativity by giving Doty the one-finger salute from the inverted position as he hung upside down in his car.

New Farmer City Raceway promoter Don Hammer was on hand Friday night, and the UMP late model driver made his second straight appearance at this event.

A half-dozen more BMARA cars attempted to qualify Friday, with Mike Hess and Randy Koch making the main event but not reaching the "magic four" needed to guarantee a starting spot in Saturday's finale. Also taking attempts tonight were Harley Slotten, Bryan Walters, Aaron Fiscus and Paul Perkins.

Defending champion Cory Kruseman wowed the crowd as he took to the track with a bicycle wheel and tire on the left-front of his car. It seemed to work as he led all the way in the feature event. Many of the major teams are now building spe-

cial cars strictly for this event using exotic materials to save weight, and the rumors on the weight of some cars are almost unbelievable.

Among the hoard of photographers on hand this weekend is Grand Forks, ND's Palmer Berger, widely regarded as one of the best in the business when it comes to shooting open-wheel cars.

The four-day extravaganza wrapped up on Saturday, January 8. The alphabet soup of features started with twin I-features and worked its way through a series of eliminations until 24 out of the original 250 drivers that tried to qualify were set up for the 50-lap finale. With a starting time of 1:30 pm for the first "I", and the final event not wrapping up until nearly 11:30 pm, it was a long day in the building, but the crowd didn't seem to mind.

Speaking of the crowd, it was a huge one on the final night - perhaps the biggest ever. The pit area was also literally jammed with people who had purchased pit passes to watch on TV, because that was the only option left for them. Emmett Hahn was quoted as saying that within a couple years all they will be selling will be four-day tickets, as there is now such a demand for the four-day tickets that individual night tickets might not even be available.

The organizational skills needed to put on such an event are impressive, as everyone from ticket takers and security to press room and on-track personnel seem to know exactly what their jobs are and how to do them correctly, as the entire event seems to flow so well - a major task given the enormity of the operation.

While Kevin Doty and Brett Hearn were able to climb the ladder through a couple preliminary features, no one made a big charge like J.J. Yeley did last year. Yeley himself couldn't duplicate last year's rush as bad luck and an ill-handling car kept him from being a serious threat.

The feature itself was a smooth one, with only three yellow flags in the 50-lap grind. Tracy Hines led all the way with Kruseman chasing him throughout. It was a great night for the Wilke-Pak team out of Wisconsin as they took a first and a third, with hard-charging Dave Darland providing much of the excitement in the main.

With one car leading the features from start to finish each night, the races didn't seem as good this year as some previous years, but I'm looking through the jaded eyes of one who has been here many times before. I was sitting near a number of people here for their first time and they were totally impressed with the entire event.

Among the most noteworthy drives of the weekend were from New Zealand ace Michael Pickens, from 19th to sixth in the main, and Tim McCreadie, certainly one of the brightest young talents driving anything on the dirt, from 18th to ninth.

Thirteen more drivers had the dubious distinction of rolling over tonight, bringing the four-day total to 47.

Kevin Olson joined Chad DeSelle as BMARA drivers that made the main event, but neither managed to finish in the top ten. It was good to see Olson back in a competitive ride after sitting out the event last year.

Langlade County to Host 2004 Banquet

ANTIGO, WI, January 6 -- The Langlade County Speedway's 2004 awards banquet will be held on February 26 at Indian Springs Lodge & Conference Center in Carter. Tickets are now on sale, available from Goldstar Racing Supplies in Clintonville and Dewans in Antigo.

The hospitality room opens at 4 pm, dinner is at 6 and the awards ceremonies will be at 7 pm. The hotel has set aside rooms as in past years but they must be reserved early, as they are available on a first-call, first-served basis.

Red Cedar Announces Awards Banquet

by Ed Reichert

MENOMONIE, WI -- The 2005 annual meeting and election of officers, plus the dance and banquet honoring the drivers who excelled during the 2004 racing season at the Red Cedar Speedway, will be held on Saturday, January 22, at Westgate Sportsman's Club.

Highlighting the annual meeting will be the election of officers of the Red Cedar Racing Association who will be responsible for preparations for the coming racing

season. Up for election will be two officers positions, two board positions and driver representatives for each of the six divisions that will race at the Speedway in 2005. The annual meeting begins at 1 pm.

Later that same evening the banquet will be held, honoring the top drivers at the Speedway during the 2004 season. The banquet begins at 6 pm, with the awards ceremony to commence at 7 and dancing to follow. Set to be honored will be the top ten

drivers in track points in all five divisions that competed during 2004, including the WISSOTA-sanctioned late models, modifieds, super stocks and street stocks and the Speedway's pure stocks.

Tickets must be purchased prior to the night of the banquet. Contact Rich Creaser at (715) 664-8415 for ticket information or purchasing. The Westgate Sportsman's Club is in Eau Claire, located next to Fanny Hill Supper Club. Call Patti Rhead with any other questions at (715) 235-5777.

Minnesota Modified Nationals to Offer Biggest Payday of 2005

ALEXANDRIA, MN, January 10 -- FYE Motorsports director Chris Stepan will once again partner with the Viking Speedway, this time for the inaugural running of the Minnesota Modified Nationals, to be held at the Speedway on Saturday and Sunday, July 2-3.

Stepan is hoping to building on the success of the Viking Fall Classic, which he also promotes at the central Minnesota track in October every year.

There are upwards of 500 WISSOTA-licensed modified drivers in the region but few "big-money" specials for them. The Minnesota Modified Nationals will pay the winner \$7,000 and guarantee \$700 just to take the green flag in the feature event. Between 100 and 200 open-wheeled competitors are expected for the biggest payday of any WISSOTA-sanctioned modified race in 2005.

WISSOTA Midwest modifieds will also be on the card both nights, racing for a pair of \$500-to-win features.

If a driver is fortunate enough to win both nights, FYE Motorsports will throw in an additional \$500 bonus to that competitor. Additionally, Sunday night's Mid-mod show will be the first night of a five-race long "Independence Tour" for the division, which will pay a hefty point fund at its conclusion.

For more information on the Minnesota Modified Nationals, call Stepan at (715) 497-8916.

IMCA Contingency Awards to Fitzgerald, Toland, Christians

BROWNSBURG, IN, December 13 -- Feature wins in three different states, by drivers in three different divisions, determined recipients of the top IMCA contingency awards given by Impact Racing.

Dan Fitzgerald of Las Vegas, NV, received the first-place prize based on his championship of the IMCA

Modified Winter Series at Canyon Raceway in Peoria, AZ. From Hillsdale, IL, Rob Toland got the second-place prize after he won the Deery Brothers Summer Series for IMCA late models event at Jackson County Speedway in Maquoketa, IA. The third-place prize went to Jeremy Christians of Horicon, WI; Christians captured the IMCA

Stock Car Nationals at Ark-La-Tex Speedway in Vivian, LA.

Impact Racing awarded product certificates to feature winners at 70 designated specials held throughout 2004. Drivers received one chip for each win at those events for the drawing, conducted at the IMCA home office.

Raivich Named PR Director for Chicagoland, Route 66

JOLIET, IL -- Raceway Associates, owner and operator of Chicagoland Speedway and Route 66 Raceway, has named Meier Raivich as director of public relations. A veteran sports industry publicist, Raivich will oversee all media relations and communications activity for the motorsports complex.

Raivich joins Raceway Associates with extensive knowledge of the Chicagoland media, which he developed while serving as the director of media services for the Chicago Wolves (AHL hockey team). Additionally, Raivich has amassed a great deal of experience in motorsports as an account supervisor with Alan Taylor Communications in New York City, a leading PR agency focused in the world of sports and events. While at Alan Taylor Communications, Raivich worked closely with NASCAR and NHRA, which sanction four major events hosted at Chicagoland Speedway

and Route 66 Raceway (two NHRA events, a NASCAR Busch Series event and a NASCAR Nextel Cup Series event).

"Meier brings a unique combination of experience to Raceway Associates," said Matthew Alexander, vice-president and general manager of Chicagoland Speedway and Route 66 Raceway. "His experience within the Chicago market coupled with his extensive understanding of the motorsports landscape make him an ideal person to head up our communications effort as we continue growing our reputation as a leader in the motorsports industry and a leading force in Chicago sports."

Raceway Associates, LLC, is made up of the combined interests of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Corporation, International Speedway Corporation and the founding owners of Route 66 Raceway, LLC.

Successful Veteran Promoter Helfrich Passes

by Doc Lehman

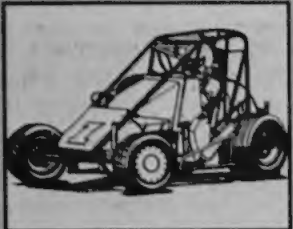
HAUBSTADT, IN, December 29 -- Edward Helfrich, 76, of Haubstadt, passed away suddenly on Wednesday, December 29, 2004, from a heart attack. Helfrich was the long-time owner of the Tri-State Speedway in Haubstadt and was also involved with son Tom Helfrich's racing team and driving career.

Helfrich and his wife, Irma, acquired Tri State Speedway in 1958 and promoted Tri State Speedway for nearly 30 years. Eventually Helfrich's son Tom and his wife Lorin and son Blake assumed the reins of Tri State Speedway after Tom's retirement from driving dirt late models. Helfrich leaves behind his wife of 54 years, Irma; daugh-

ters Karen Maurer, Janet Adler, Nancy Mayer; sons Jim and Tom, who is an inductee in the National Dirt Late Model Hall of Fame; 13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church, 211 N. Vine St., Haubstadt, IN 47639.

Broadsliding the Speedways



Driving under the alias of Mikey Fedorcak of Klaw Bone, IN, former USAC and NASCAR champion Tony Stewart scored a fantastic victory in the opening round of the Tony Barhorst-Larry Boos presentation of the "Rumble in Fort Wayne" at the Memorial Coliseum on Wednesday, December 29. The

Columbus hot shoe had no car to drive the evening before the race, but at a friendly card game with a group of USAC officials and fans, Tony contacted Mike Fedorcak at 11:30 Tuesday evening and offered to buy the "Munchkin" that he had driven to victory here in 2001. The car had been idle ever since.

Arriving at the Coliseum on Wednesday Tony wasn't even sure the car would start up. But start up it did, and after qualifying a few hundredths of a second off the fast time, Stewart placed second in his heat and took the lead on lap 14 from rising star Billy Wease to score the victory. It was only after he climbed out of the car that the fans realized it was Tony Stewart behind the wheel.

Rounding out the top five in the 60-lap event were Dave Darland, Rick Corson, Tony Elliott and Mel Kenyon. Fast qualifier and heat winner Aaron Pierce placed sixth. Other heats went to Johnny Parsons, Doug Cross and Darland. The semis went to Corson, Kyle Robbins and David Gough.

The supporting 30-lap UMRA TQ midget feature went to 2004 champion Terry Goff. He was followed by Derek Fisher, Jack Duffy, Andrew Prather and Jason Goff. Heat winners were Terry Goff and Ronnie Combs.

Making the long haul to the Fort Wayne Coliseum from Sarasota, FL, were veteran driver Jack Duffy and car owner Dave Percario and Percario's 1961 Trevis-built TQ. Duffy, originally from Boonton, NJ, is a two-time Florida TQ champion and

is the feature winner of the only TQ race held at the Madison Square Garden in New York. He turned in a commendable performance with his third-place showing in the feature after placing third in his heat. This veteran driver, now in his 70s, competed one other time at the old Fort Wayne Memorial Stadium, back in 1971, driving a full-sized midget built and owned by the late Bill Mataka. He recalled riding up to the racing surface at the old Coliseum in the elevator along with Gary Bettenhausen, Larry Cannon and Johnny Parsons with their race cars.

Dave Darland of Lincoln, IN, scored an exciting feature win at the second "Rumble" program in Fort Wayne on Thursday, December 30. Driving the Bob Bohn midget, Darland spun very early in the race and had to restart last in the 14-car field. He got by Canadian teenaged Ford Focus midget driver Ryan Litt on lap 42 and went on to win the 60-lap event. Rounding out the top ten were fast qualifier Aaron Pierce, Mike Fedorcak, Ginny Quinones, Ronnie Wuerdeman, Derek Bischak, Litt, David Thompson, Rich Corson and John Ivy.

Heat winners were Corson, Darland, Quinones and Bischak. Winning semis were Pierce, Rod Anderson and Ike Beasley.

The UMRA TQ feature saw a repeat win for Terry Goff of Fortville, IN, in the 30-lapper. Trailing were Jason Goff, Jack Duffy, Derek Fisher, Kent Lane, Becky Brown, Ronnie Combs, Andrew Prather and Mike Bien.

Winning heats were Duffy and Jason Goff.

Congratulations are extended to driver Ray Bull and Mega Motorsports on winning the 2004 American Race Drivers Club championship. They were honored at the 65th anniversary of the ARDC during the annual banquet at the Stan Lobitz Catering Hall. Driver Bull, of Bloomsburg, PA, was honored for his fifth consecutive ARDC championship. His car owners, Jeff Aquilini and Larry Gauker, were honored for their second con-

Crocky Wright

secutive car owners' crown.

The Dutch Schaefer-Jiggs Peters Memorial Rookie of the Year Award went to former micro-sprint driver Dave Shirk of Mohnton, PA. He placed sixth in the final standings.

The Bill Schindler Founders' Award was presented to Ron Heddendorf of Philadelphia, and making the presentation was Stan Lobitz and Mel Mowbray.

It was a great honor for me to receive the Jim Blunk Award at the 49th annual USAC National Awards Ceremony at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Indianapolis on December 10, and I wish to express my deepest appreciation to all the officials of USAC for presenting me this coveted award, for "contributions to the sport of midget auto racing." The award has been presented annually since 1971 in memory of the late Jim Blunk, a USAC Midget Series steward who passed away in 1971. Making the presentation was Nelson Stewart, father of USAC "Triple" champion and NASCAR champion Tony Stewart.

January birthdays include Blake Hollingsworth on the second; Warren Mockler, Barry Reed and Bill Puterbaugh on the fourth; Roger McCluskey, Jr., on the seventh; Bill Cassella, Andy Hurtubise and Jimmy Maguire on the eighth; Mike Streicher and Russ Gamester on the ninth; Fred Bruckner, myself, Larry McAllister and Andy Rooney on the 14th; Rick Treadway and Evan Dawson on the 15th; Rolie Beale on the 16th; Rob Parish and Tony Hunt on the 18th; Ernie Saxton on the 21st; Art Cross and Tony Elliott on the 24th; Noki Fornoro on the 26th; Robbie Flock on the 27th and Todd Beach on the 29th. Happy birthday to all, and a Happy New Year, too.

Notes will reach me at 1714 Georgetown Road, Lot 12, Speedway, IN 46224.

North Tundra Racing Beat

Jerry O'Brien



Last time we announced the inductees to the Superior Speedway Hall of Fame. After our deadline there was a change in the voting that did affect the final tally as to whom would be inducted. The corrected list shows the inactive drivers as Don Springer, Vern Shaver, Barry Kettering, Bob Gherardi and Don Roseen; the active driver nominee is still Butch Madsen, and the pioneer nominee is Art Johnson.

I mentioned previously that I was surprised to see my name on the pioneer list last year. I was even more surprised to see that I actually got a vote! I think I'll be about 80 years old if and when I make it, as there are more deserving candidates than I ahead of me. I will make the formal announcement of the inductees at the speedway's banquet on January 29.

There has been some movement regarding the promoter status at Superior for 2005, and something has occurred that could be big, but I'm sworn by the Speedway Board of Directors not to officially reveal it at this time. I was told by a member of the Speedway board that their meetings with the County Speedway Committee have been much better. It seems that the County Committee members have finally waded through all the BS that has gone on in the past few months and are finally "getting it." The Speedway Board members have been treated much better and with more respect as the County Committee members have finally come to a better understanding of the whole situation. I can say that contract talks between the Speedway and the County have been fruitful, and most likely there will be a contract worked out by the end of January.

I also mentioned last time that I was invited to a meeting between representatives of the four participating tracks and representatives from AmsOil to tentatively set dates for AmsOil's Late Model Series for '05. The penciled-in dates include Wednesday, May 25, at Superior; Tuesday, June 7, at

Hibbing; Sunday, July 31, at Proctor; Friday, August 29, at Ashland; Saturday, September 3, at Hibbing; and Saturday, September 10, at Superior. Also tentative at Superior are two WDRL dates and two IRA Sprint Series dates.

Some general news: looks as though the Northland in general, and WISSOTA specifically, will be well represented this January and February in Florida at East Bay Raceway and Volusia Park Speedway. Among the pre-entered modified competitors are Steve Arpin, Craig Scott, Kent Arment, Mark Trautner and Shawn Peterson from WISSOTA, along with five-time WISSOTA national mod champion Ron Jones, though he does not run much WISSOTA anymore; Jones instead concentrates on big-money shows. I suspect that Craig Thatcher and Joey Jensen will also be there.

On the late model side, I've heard that Rick Hanestad may go to Florida, but that is not confirmed. What is confirmed is that Caley Emerson of Grand Rapids will race in Florida in a new chassis-engine combo. Also, 2004 WDRL points champ and rookie of the year Brady Smith is slated to race at East Bay.

On the local level, Matt Sorenson has purchased the entire modified operation of Kerry Hanson.

Joanne and I will attend the ABC Raceway's awards banquet in Ashland this coming Saturday, and the next weekend we will attend Superior's banquet. Six days later we will be on the road to Florida, where we will attend races at East Bay and Volusia as well as New Smyrna Speedway. We will cover the RPM Workshops again for the umpteenth year; since there has been a change in the dates for the Workshops we will try to make as many days as we can. In a departure from previous years, there will not be an awards dinner; instead the Auto Racing Promoter of the Year awards will instead be handed out at a breakfast prior to the opening of the three-day RPM meetings. This works right in with our move from the Tampa area to our trailer at the Daytona Beach campgrounds.

I am still skeptical about Bobby Hartlief and the DIRT

Motorsports bunch. Once again a lot of promises are being made and a lot of virtual money is being waved about. I say "virtual" because I don't believe there is any there! The only time Boundless Motorsports have come up with money is when they were forced to pay Ted Johnson for the World of Outlaws Sprint Series, according to my sources. I think we are still in a huge mess as far as dirt late model racing is concerned. I still believe the best bang for the buck is Jim Wilson's WDRL outfit. All of this turmoil can do nothing but help him and his series as an alternative.

Apparently the NARA is also becoming a player, with the announcement of 13 televised races on ESPN2 as well as a 2005 point fund of \$178,000. They will also be the sanction for the East Bay Internationals.

Finally, more sad news here on the tundra. Kenneth T. Andersen passed away January 12 at the age of 62. Ken was very involved in area auto racing, sponsoring several drivers, including Steve Roseen. Ken was also involved in the Vintage Times Car club, the Minnesota Street Rod Association and the Arizona Street Rod Association.

Jerry Gehl, father of local late model driver Todd Gehl, passed away Saturday, January 15, after a battle with cancer. Jerry was a winning driver in his own right and was inducted into the Superior Speedway Hall of Fame. I always remember the battles between Jerry and Dave Hankins back in the early '70s. I will miss seeing Jerry at the races each Friday night cheering on his son Todd.

Joanne and I send our deepest condolences to the families of both Ken Andersen and Jerry Gehl.

We have been trying to keep ourselves warm here on the tundra waiting for this latest wave of highs-below-zero temperatures to pass, so with that, that's all from here on the really frigid tundra for this time. We will be in Florida when the February issues will be printed, so we will pick up next in the March issue.

Sprint Bandits Series Put on Hold for '05

TULSA, OK, December 29 - It has been determined by series founder and president Emmett Hahn that the O'Reilly Sprint Bandits series will suspend operations for the 2005 season.

"There's still some uncertainty in the 410 ranks, and with our ASCS 360 group so strong in this part of the country (southern Midwest), it's probably in everybody's best interest that we plan on getting the Sprint Bandits into some different markets. And that's what we plan to do in

2006 or '07. We just need to see how some of the other situations in the 410 world shake out first," commented Hahn.

"The series' (spec) head not only makes 410 sprint car racing more cost-effective, but the series head was also on equal ground with the sleeved-down open motors, so basically a guy with a \$10,000 or \$12,000 engine could be competitive and a guy with an expensive open motor could still race with us, too. So we now know that

the concept and the formula both work."

The fledgling series contested ten events in 2004, including a non-points-paying event at Memphis (TN) Motorsports Park in May. In nine points-awarding events, the series averaged 29 cars per race, with events in Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska and Oklahoma. Shane Stewart capped the series title by winning the season finale at Devil's Bowl Speedway on October 16.

race in Nebraska," Joe Kosiski said. "We are sanctioning the SportMods with IMCA this season, and this Deery race gives us more involvement with IMCA.

Pit gates for the April 1 program open at 3 pm, with times for hot laps and racing to be determined. Joining the Deery Series event on Friday's card is a complete WDRL show, along with qualifiers for the grand national, modified, pro am and hobby stock classes. Feature events for these classes and a complete WDRL show are on tap Saturday.

More information about the Spring Spectacular is available by calling the track office at (402) 342-3453 or 731-4592, ext. 3. The race day number is (402) 944-2233.

The NRP date puts the Deery Series at 19 races, six of which are slated before the start of national late model point season in April.

WalTom Racing to Run ASA LMs in '05

CHICAGO, IL, January 12 -- WalTom Racing will change its series approach in 2005, but not much else will be different for one of the top teams on the former ASA National Tour.

WalTom Racing will enter the ASA Late Model Series for the coming racing season. Stephen Leicht, who just turned 18 years old, will drive the entire schedule of events, while ASA veteran and former National Tour race winner Robbie Pyle will join him as a teammate for at least a partial schedule. This move comes after financial troubles forced the close-down of the ASA National Tour for the time being.

Leicht is anxious to get back behind the seat of an ASA late model after he won the very first

event he had entered - at Calhoun Country Speedway in Michigan in 2004. Pyle also got to drive in an ASA late model last year, using the same car that Leicht piloted to victory in a CRA Super Series event at Columbus (OH) Motor Speedway, where he started and finished second.

Pyle is cutting back on his racing to help build up his sign business.

The cars will be maintained by legendary ASA crew chief Howie Lettow in his Milwaukee, WI, race shop. Lettow has proven to be a valuable mentor for Leicht and will continue in that role.

The ASA Late Model season kicks off on May 7 at Baer Field Speedway in Indiana.

I-80 Speedway to Host Deery Opener

GREENWOOD, NE, January 14 -- The IMCA Deery Brothers Summer Series for late models will make its first-ever visit to the Cornhusker State, when the 19th annual tour opens Friday, April 1, at I-80 Speedway located at Nebraska Raceway Park.

IMCA late models will be featured on opening night of the two-day Spring Spectacular at Greenwood, then head back to the more familiar Hamilton County Speedway in Webster City, IA, for a Saturday, April 2, show.

Brothers Joe, Steve and Ed Kosiski are co-owners of the 4/10th-mile semi-banked dirt track, along with Mike Merrill and Jon Schwartz. Each of the Kosiski brothers has competed on the Deery circuit, and Merrill has also raced in the late model division, while Schwartz ran an IMCA-sanctioned modified.

"We're glad to have the first Deery Series

DIRT Motorsports Acquires UMP, Stacker 2 Sponsorship

NORMAN, OK, December 7 -- Boundless Motor Sports Racing, Inc., d/b/a DIRT MotorSports, has announced that it has purchased United Midwestern Promoters Motorsports, LLC (UMP), a late model and modified sanctioning body which includes the Xtreme DirtCar Series. Included in the sale is the sponsorship agreement with XDCS title sponsor Stacker 2, a nationally marketed herbal supplement.

A purchase price of \$2.4 million will be paid to United Midwestern Promoters Motorsports, LLC; National Speedways of Iowa, Inc.; Track Enterprises, Inc., of Illinois; Ken Schrader Racing, Inc., of North Carolina; and Lebanon Valley Auto Racing Corporation of New York.

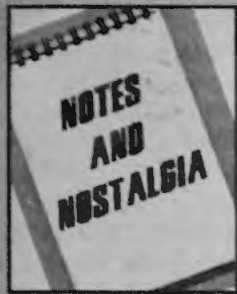
For the past 20 years UMP has been a major player within the late model and modified circuits, with more than 3,000 registered open-wheel modified drivers. The UMP acquisition strengthens DIRT MotorSports' position as the largest sanctioning body for sprint, late model and modified dirt track racing in the United States, and DIRT MotorSports management expects to use this purchase to build upon a successful 2004 season with significant growth in 2005.

The Xtreme DirtCar Series also has a television contract with Speed Channel.

When the deal is completed, DIRT Motorsports will control and operate several different national racing series, including the World of Outlaws Sprint Series and Late Model Series, and the Xtreme DirtCar Series.

Notes & Nostalgia

Jerry Dorich



We've become a Junior fan by stages. (Is there another Junior besides the number 8 Junior?) At first we thought of him as a wise punk who was where he was primarily due to his name. As time has gone by, though, Junior has constantly done things that have caused us to change our mind. Like winning at a short track. Like racing in sports car races. Like showing the courage to continue racing despite nearly being incinerated. Like being genuine. Like having Class, as in capitalized.

The latest admiration building block came from - of all places - the January 2 issue of the Chicago *Sun-Times* in a column by Debra Pickett. In it, Pickett reflects back on the past 12 months of lunches with various newsmakers. During the July 11 race weekend, Pickett claimed to have had lunch with Junior inside his trailer. Junior terminated the interlude thus: "I gotta take a dump," saith Debra.

We racing fans can't help but devour anything written about racing. A lot of it just passes through without much thought given to it, but occasionally some thoughts linger and provoke other thoughts - and a different way of looking at things. Such was the case recently with Tom Jensen quoting - of all people seemingly unrelated to racing - Albert Einstein. Einstein defined clinical insanity as repeating the same thing over and over and expecting a different outcome. Jensen applied the quote to both the IRL and the OWRS.

If you think about it, even if you're a fan of either series, Jensen's quote is appropriate. IRL TV ratings are continually going down. The OWRS' races are on a TV network nobody heard of. Indy crowds and interest in Indy are down. Except for Indy, the public is generally unaware of either series. Well-intentioned and strong attempts to "humanize" IRL drivers have failed to make the public care. The Indy 500 winner could walk around most cities and not be recognized. NASCAR continually trumps both series (in much the same way the NFL continually trumps NASCAR). With all these and other signs present, obviously something different is needed.

Jensen had no solution, except advocating the band-aid of scheduling Grand Am and American LeMans Series events along with IRL-OWRS events. We've expounded our solution many times before in this column, so we won't bore you again.

A related and provocative thought was expressed by Ben Blake, a Speed Channel regular, who claimed that the first Brickyard 400 changed racing history. From that point, Blake feels that open-wheel racing was doomed, with stock car racing set to dominate. Blake jokingly threatened to write a book explaining that The Split didn't matter that much.

Interesting, but we don't fully agree with this one. The Brickyard 400 was Tony George acceding to the facts at the time. Chief among these was that NASCAR already was immensely popular and could help his track. NASCAR had a dozen or more drivers who were household names and others were soon to become so. CART had some genuine heroes in Little Al, Danny Sullivan, Emerson Fittipaldi, Nigel Mansell and Michael Andretti, but most of these were leaving without adequate replacements.

Tony George's role in The Split was a sincere response to the debilitating effect of NASCAR on open-wheel racing's popularity. It seemed visionary at the time, but circumstances have

corrupted it into the very thing it was supposed to replace.

Our big hope is that those circumstances - one of which is the Big Automakers' involvement - might force the IRL into a different battle plan. With Chevrolet having announced its retirement and Toyota making noises of dissatisfaction, it seems unlikely Honda would stick around a series that offers it no competitors. That leads to the question of where the IRL would get its engines. Ultimately the answer is in the engines that power nearly all of the circle-track open-wheel series in this country - the venerable V-8 stock block. NASCAR still uses and fosters them, so there should be no supply problem. They should be heavier and consequently slow the cars down. They'll also have that deep, throaty sound that fans love. They've been successful before in Indy cars until rivals legislated them out of competitiveness. We don't say that they're a cure-all for the IRL, but at least they'll bury Einstein's diagnosis.

The Chase for the Championship, NASCAR's euphemism for its playoff, has been hailed by most sportswriters as a complete success. It's been described as daring, bold, brilliant, innovative - you name the complimentary adjective. In fact, it adopted a limp-wrist approach to changing the points system; the points awarded were only slightly different from the old system. Winning races still is not rewarded enough. This first made-for-TV champion, though deserving praise for his mastery of the system, won fewer races than several other drivers. Is it only incidental that these drivers are more popular than the champion?

We should stop complaining because the Chase is here to stay, but we've gotten weary of listening to NASCAR pat itself on the back - even if a lot of that patting is done by its surrogates, the racing press.

That said, we admit we were excited about and eagerly anticipated that last race. Since there are obligations other than racing, we spent that Sunday afternoon at a retirement party for a close friend. We prayed the VCR wouldn't fail. The party was held at a Chicago watering hole called Cork and Kerry. While not formally called a sports bar, the Cork pleasantly oozes South Side Irish working middle class, youth and athleticism. It's so successful that it has expanded into a previously vacant lot next door. It has about a half-dozen TVs - some of them plasma and others just plain large. We spent about five hours there - not drinking, incidentally.

Not once during that time, did we observe any of the TVs turned to the NASCAR race, nor did we hear any conversations about The Chase. What were they watching and talking about? The Bears, of course. And what are the Bears? A mediocre (at best) football team currently without an NFL-quality quarterback that was playing a dull game and getting trounced. When that debacle was over, channels were not switched to The Chase, but to another NFL game featuring teams that had no geographical ties to Chicagoans. We had to wait until we went home to see the results of The Chase. There was no problem on the radio that we listened to driving home, because the Bears were the only topic on the sports call-in shows.

The VCR had not let us down, so we settled into what figured to be an exciting evening of race-watching. And it was exciting, but at the end of it we felt vaguely unsatisfied, like we had been conned by the hype. Our invisible angel told us that Busch raced hard, but our invisible devil told us that he had stroked some and that he had won only one race from The Chase and three all season. Sure, he dodged misfortune, but

there was no charisma as in Jimmy Bryan's famous drive out and back through the fence at Phoenix to win a championship in 1957, or the suspense of the bouncing from car to car at Riverside indulged in by Foyt, Andretti and Bobby Unser in the epic USAC championship battles of 1967-'68.

In the days that followed, numerous articles told us that The Chase had indeed been successful, based mostly on large increases in TV viewers. This patting on the back would no doubt reach its crescendo in the awards banquet. Incidentally, the only thing we found laudable (or even worth paying attention to) at the banquet was Jimmy Fennig mentioning both Jerry Gundersen and Al Schill.

Oddly enough, Ed Hinton, who we've disagreed with before, was one of the dissenters. Hinton claimed that The Chase was indeed like many Super Bowls - it didn't live up to its hype.

NASCAR and its new-found friends have an arrogance about them that we don't like. We're sure NASCAR's responsible for "Pit Bull" not returning next season - no matter that the Speed Channel people say it was bad ratings. "Pit Bull" was too openly critical of NASCAR - and was enjoyable to boot. Can't have that. Poole was strident at times, but the show was a different voice that was enjoyable to hear.

Thirty years ago, *The Sporting News* completely ignored NASCAR. Recently they named Jimmie Johnson their Driver of the Year, snubbing Kurt the Malaprop. In winning the IRL championship, Tony Kanaan completed 3,305 laps out of 3,305 raced in the IRL this season, leading 889 of them. He finished on the lead lap in every race against competition furnished by two of the largest automakers in the world. On the way to yet another World Championship, Michael Schumacher so dominated F1 that the series started writing rules designed to thwart him. Of course, neither Schumacher nor Kanaan won the Chase, and that's all that matters.

The arrogance found its way into other matters. We read in Jayski that the US Army had adopted a tear-off system for its helicopters that it got from NASCAR. The blurb made no mention that NASCAR "developed" the idea from dirt-track open-wheelers who have been using tear-offs for years. From reading Jayski, you'd have thought NASCAR invented it - along with the wheel itself, we suppose.

When almost everyone you sample says The Chase is wonderful and you disagree, you begin doubting your thought processes. The Chase apologists offer all kinds of numbers to prove their point, and all we can offer are bits of anecdotal evidence - like our observations of what's watched in taverns and what's talked about by Chicagoans. By chance, a friend - not even thinking of NASCAR - unintentionally provided the salve to our doubts by recommending the reading of "Amusing Ourselves to Death," by Neil Postman. While cleverly attacking television in general, Postman claims that we moderns, mainly because of television, "submit all life to the sovereignty of numbers." We tend to believe that "truth is believed to be best discovered and expressed in numbers." Postman, of course, believes that numbers are not the only way to arrive at correct answers. Thank you, Postman, for the ammunition.

It also seems that some writers are giving NASCAR credit for dreaming up the SAFER barriers. Thought the oft-maligned Tony George had some role in that, didn't he?

Going against almost 40 years of the Dogma of the Church of the Rear Engine, we're hoping that USAC's new Silver Crown cars somehow become the future cars of the Indy 500.

Ramblin' 'bout Racin'

Charlie Spry



Some more news and notes to pass the time away while waiting for the local stock car racing season to start. Seems like a long ways off, but it will come fast!

The Flip Merwin memorial snowmobile race will be held in Wausau at Sunnyvale Park on January 22-23, as the Wausau 525 championships. NASCAR Cup driver Scott Wimmer and Truck Series racer Chris Wimmer will be among those on hand to sign autographs.

Rules for the Central Wisconsin Late Model group have been set, and they are the same as the Mid-State Challenge Series. Both sets of rules are virtually the same as those at Jefferson, Columbus and the Dells. We are getting close to having the same rules at most tracks statewide for the limited late models - something that tracks running super late models should emulate. Great to see everyone getting on the same page, and maybe we will see a lot more drivers doing some traveling around. I think we will, as several drivers that I have talked to indicate that they want to travel to various tracks on occasion in

2005.

Congratulations to Paul Block, who won the track title for late models at Tomahawk in 2004. About mid-season Paul had noted to me that he didn't start out the year with winning a title in mind, but by about mid-season he realized it could happen - and make it happen he did! Paul is one of the super-nice drivers who has the right attitude - that is, to have fun. Word is that the late models might not be racing at this track in '05, which, ironically, is Paul's car number.

Lake Geneva Raceway will include a new division in its Friday shows this season - a reincarnation of the "Weapons" division. This division was originally raced many years ago as an entry-level hobby stock-type class, which grew into a much more expensive division, which so often happens. The new division will once again be entry-level for full-sized stock cars, based on the Midwest Enduro Series' rules. Good to see this, and we hope costs don't get out of hand soon.

Racing veteran quote of the month: "Racing is like being in the mafia. Once you are in it, you are in it for good!"

'03 Jefferson late model champion Scott Nottestad has his car up for sale, as he plans on taking a year off before building a new car for the Wisconsin Challenge Series.

Word is that the Mid-State Challenge Series for limited late models has at least ten events planned - two at Golden Sands, four at Wausau, and four at Marshfield. Other events are being worked on as well, but nothing is finalized.

In working on updating my yearly race statistics, I came across a few things. Bill Sweeney's eight feature wins this past season in the Bandit division at Jefferson bumped him to the top of the stats with 13 wins, bypassing Bill Reynolds' six, with stats being kept since the division's inception in 2001.

At Madison, in the Midwest Truck division, John Wood's six fast times this season has put him atop this list with 34, bypassing Dan Harris, who was quickest 29 times.

At Marshfield, Keith Wirtz won five feature events in the four-cylinder division in 2004, earning him the track title as well as moving him into the top of the chart for feature wins there, with 12 total. Paul Berg and John Bell are next with seven apiece. Rodney Feltz's single win in the one-man cruisers there put him atop that division with 18, topping Doug Becker's 17 wins.

Dave Gigl has purchased a 1996 late model chassis - a former Dave Cabelka car that was raced at Tomahawk. Dave is unsure at this point just where he will race it; his past experience is largely at Jefferson.

Racing Reflections

Fr. Dale Grubba



It was April 19, 2002, and Jack Roush was celebrating his 60th birthday flying an experimental airplane near Troy, AL, when he hit a set of unmarked power lines and crashed in a lake. If you were going to pick a time and a place to crash, you couldn't have done better than Roush, for as it turned out, retired Marine Corps sergeant Larry Hicks was nearby with a boat and came to his rescue.

When asked if he had changed his life after his near-death experience, Roush commented, "There are no promises, but I've made a commitment to be more caring and gentler in all regards. I may have been a little short on patience in the past, but I think I'll be more patient going forward."

Two years have passed, and Matt Kenseth was asked if Jack Roush has changed from what he was like before the crash to the bottom of the lake.

"There is a big difference," Matt declared. "Jack definitely changed a lot. I think whenever anything like that happens you change a lot for a while. Then you change back to what you used to be. That is natural. I've seen it happen to people who have had a life-threatening illness."

"The first day you get out of bed you appreciate it. Then it declines a little bit. It is just human nature. But Jack is definitely appreciative and enjoys life. He definitely seems to enjoy things more than he did three years ago before the accident."

"But Jack changed a lot and only came back a little bit to where he was. He definitely has changed today from what he was before the accident. He

is more patient, definitely softer, a lot more lenient. He used to rule with an iron fist. He still does to an extent, but he is definitely easier going."

Does that extend to Roush Racing winning back-to-back championships? Does it mean more to Roush then he lets on?

"Jack definitely cares," Kenseth added. "I think a big weight was lifted off his shoulders in 2003. He was so close so many times with Mark Martin."

"He definitely enjoyed it. Jack works hard. Jack is a perfect owner. If you were going to build a team this is how you would do it."

"We talk about not running good. He doesn't necessarily get down on me. He gets down on himself for not giving me what I need to win. He gives us all the tools, whether it's personnel, engines, chassis. He gives us what we ask for to win races and championships. It's up to us to learn how to use it properly."

Kenseth will be driving the number 17 Waste Management-sponsored car for 15 races in the NASCAR Busch Series in 2005. Waste Management will also be an associate sponsor of his car in the Nextel Cup Series. "I have done a lot of hospitalities for (Waste Management) in the past couple of years," Matt commented at the sponsorship announcement. "I've met a lot of their drivers and had a great time getting to know them. They are proud of their work and the company they work for. I'm equally proud to represent them."

"Also, they have been sponsoring the Pick Up Places Award the past couple of years. I have been a recipient of that award many times because of my qualifying. I think they were sick of writing us the check. They are just giving us a big one at the beginning of the year."

Fiesta City Speedway Adds Supers to '05 Lineup

MONTEVIDEO, MN, December 19 -- Fiesta City Speedway officials have announced the addition of WISSOTA super stocks to the track's 2005 Friday night line-up.

The super stocks will join four other WISSOTA-sanctioned classes at Fiesta City - late models, modifieds, Midwest modifieds and street stocks. Along with the WISSOTA classes there will also be pure stocks and a cruiser division, which will move to a single-driver set-up this year.

Dave Nurmi of Nurmi Racing Enterprises explained that track officials have submitted the necessary paperwork to WISSOTA to have the super officially added to the track's program.

Round & Around



The party's over, at least until next year. Another great time was had when the racing family reunited for Slinger Speedway's awards banquet. The year 2004 was the 57th year of operation for the speedy quarter-mile, and it capped off Wayne Erickson's 31st year of ownership. I still remember

when Erickson took over the reins of the original dirt track, then paved it and began the Slinger Nationals. Time really does fly when you're having fun. One week after the new year was rung in, the spirit of a fresh start was everywhere. Most drivers and teams will remain the same, but there will be some changes for 2005.

The most talked-about change is the departure of Eric Fransen from the Team 16 late model camp, owned by Danny and Sonya DelCamp. Earlier in the week Fransen began working as a fabricator for Ray Evernham's ASCAR Busch Grand National team, and he will later be joined by his wife and son. The empty driver's seat is still up for grabs, and the DelCamps will be busy screening interested par-

ties. The team also has a couple of dirt mods which they used just for fun, which may or may not be part of the bargain. This



Brad Mueller enjoyed Lowell Bennett's gag gift during the Slinger Speedway banquet.



Dale Prunty was Slinger's Midwest modified champion in 2004.

is the second crew member Team 16 has lost to NASCAR, as Wisconsin continues to be the hot spot for talent for the major leagues. Sonya DelCamp did a good job accepting their third-place finish in the point standings as the team's owner, then had to thank herself when giving Fransen's acceptance speech.

Since George Prentice declared his retirement and sold everything to his crew chief, a new direction may be taken for this team, which also has no driver as yet. In the audience there were many other stories, but we had to stop visiting to watch the awards presentations.

Joseph Bentfield expressed a wish to move into his father's car after a successful season in the Slinger Bees. The Thunder stock title went to Joe DeStefano, Jr., over his father, who couldn't be prouder. The Midwest Sportsman field had intense rivalry and friendship, with Gary Labonte ending up at the top of the final points standings. Dale Prunty took his second Midwest mod crown, including his four brothers as well as sponsors for their help.

Dave Feiler handily topped the late model rookie field, and he made a point to give thanks to Slinger's safety crew. Others expressed their appreciation for having a top-notch support system such as this, for this makes a driver's experience a lot less stressful. Lowell Bennett provided the comic humor of the

Fay Hendricks

evening by presenting Brad Mueller with his own version of glowing brake rotors, a common sight on Mueller's mount. The Day-Glo orange was not as easy to achieve as he thought, Bennett later told me, but the project gained the laughs it was intended for. Mueller was grateful for his second consecutive late model crown, knowing what a long journey it was to get the first one.

Among the drivers who qualified, a drawing for the much-coveted race car body came up with Dave Teske the winner. Teske was very happy with this, planning to mount the new "skin" for the season opener in April. Mark Bitzan earned the hard luck award in the late model ranks, and I still recall his awful wreck just after his elation of making the feature field. Chad Barker's crew was deemed best-dressed among the rest, and there were numerous door prizes for the audience throughout the presentations. After excellent food and company, it was over too soon. Thanks to Erickson and his hard-working staff, this was another success. Many of us gathered later to hear a live band elsewhere, and our night was a bit longer than others.



Dave Feiler accepts his late model rookie of the year honor during Slinger's banquet.

(Fay Hendricks photos)

Racin' Around Titledown



This is my first racing column in some time. I've recently returned from Milwaukee, where I underwent a bone marrow transplant for cancer. The response from the racing community (to no surprise of mine) was absolutely overwhelming. I want to thank everyone who contributed in any way, shape or form. I'm improving each week and hope to return to work sometime next month.

At any rate, we took a stroll

through the annual Racer's Auction in Green Bay last month. One of the first people we saw was Brian "Woody" Wodack, promoter of Thunderhill Raceway in Sturgeon Bay. This season Woody will be the sole captain of the ship, as his business partner of two years in the venture, Brian Duquaine, is out. "I love the challenge of promoting a weekly show," said Wodack, who was busy cutting vinyl and screening T-shirts as he talked. "I learn something new every race night."

New on Thunderhill's plate in 2005 is a bare-bones enduro class for full-sized race cars, very similar to the Chilton Challenger division at the Calumet County Raceway. "They'll be alternating every other week with the four-cylinders," said Wodack, who has been in cahoots with Merle Lisowe, longtime track prep guru and board member of the CCRA in Chilton. Thunderhill will see the return of the two-day special this September 16-17, one week prior to Chilton's Fall Invite.

So much for the days of waiting until spring to get your machines lettered and race-ready. There were already a handful of cars on display, including the late model of Tim Lemirande. Also in attendance were the modifieds of Brian and Scott Mullen, Julie McDermid, Todd Dart and Art Siefert, who's coming out of retirement after a year of flagging at area race tracks. Siefert will compete three nights per week, at Luxemburg, Sturgeon Bay and Seymour, and may even travel down south this spring to give his car a shakedown.

Replacing Siefert in the flagstand at Shawano Speedway this year will be Josh Effenberger, who shared some time with Siefert in the stand last year. At Chilton, Tracy Thrun of Horizon will replace Siefert on Friday nights.

Lots of talk at the auction in the dirt late model ranks about the Tri-Track Challenge, which paid out money to drivers who competed in a minimum of six shows at Shawano, Seymour and Antigo. "We're looking at bumping up the number of minimum shows they have to run to eight this year," said Ed Bertram, who, along with Mike Suebert and the three track promoters, helped throw the deal together. "We've already got \$18,000 in the point fund. I'm working on some more sponsors, and it's my goal to raise that deal to \$50,000."

One issue at least for Shawano's Saturday night program is the recent announcement that the Wisconsin Dirt Late Model Association has snuggled up to the Powercom family to run a 17-race schedule between their Saturday night facility in Beaver Dam and the Oshkosh track on Tuesday nights. A few thought that might suck cars away from Shawano's program. "With this Tri-Track deal I'm not too worried about losing our northern cars to the southern shows," said Bertram.

Speaking of Shawano, drivers who compete there will be glad to know the backstretch has been widened by about five feet on each side, and the old, rickety guardrail which claimed

a few victims this year will be replaced by an interlocking type of concrete barrier on each side. Last year Shawano, facing a debt of well over \$300,000, was propelled by a solid front gate late in the year, and that extra attendance helped race director Dale Hodkiewicz and company put the \$100,000 they wound up in the black towards the debt. That's after a solid point fund was promised and paid out at the end of the season.

More than 100 dump truck loads of clay have been put down at Seymour. Attempts are being made to convert the tri-oval into a regular oval for the 2005 campaign. The tri-oval was converted from the old half-mile back in the late 1980s.

Other tidbits ... Brillion's Randy Rahn in the new president of the Calumet County Racing Association. Rahn, a Grand National sportsman driver, served on the board back in the 1990s. Also, Chilton will see the return of the four-cylinder class in 2005. It's a forgotten fact that Chilton actually was one of the first dirt tracks in the area to have a weekly four-cylinder class, well before these other tracks jumped on the bandwagon. Guys like Bob and Jesse Schneider, Greg Seipel and Glenn Kees were some of the stars of that class back in the day.

IMCA hobby stocker Evan Madden of Algoma has purchased an IMCA modified from Dan Ratajczak. Maribel's Kerry Havlovetz has purchased an IMCA stock car and will come out of semi-retirement to run Luxemburg this year. Denmark's Greg Seibold purchased Shawn Kilgore's IMCA stock car to run Saturdays at Thunderhill, while Hortonville's Travis Van Straten has sold out his stock car operation and will be taking a year off from racing. Seymour's Shannon Ninham has also purchased a modified from Brian Mullen.

We also want to give a call out to my guy Joe Lebotte, who underwent the same procedure that I did down in Milwaukee. Joe's also doing well and just underwent his second bone marrow transplant a few weeks ago. We'll be praying for you, pal. Joe will serve as a car owner this year, with Doug Maurer once again racing his IMCA mod.

After more than 15 years of retirement, Chuck Grall has decided to climb back behind the wheel. Grall, a Seymour native who now lives in Pulaski, has purchased an IMCA stock car from Brian Mullen and will travel to northeastern Wisconsin dirt ovals at the ripe old age of 62. "I just retired from (Georgia-Pacific), so I've got a lot of time on my hands to work on race cars," said Grall. "I'll start in the back for a while and I'll know pretty quickly if I've still got it."

Grall may be best known as the man who beat Mark Martin. It was an IMCA modified special at 141 Speedway in 1986. "We dug the old Gremlin out of the mothballs and we beat Mark Martin," said Grall. "He wasn't in the most competitive ride. I still get people who come up and remind me of that to this day. It's kind of funny."

In addition to racing IMCA modifieds in the class's infancy in the mid-1980s, Grall was one of the top dogs in the Fox River Racing Club's old sportsman class on the quarter-mile. These were the real "good old days." Guys worked on their own cars back then - not like today, where darn near everything is bought, not built, by the driver. You saw Mustangs, Chevelles, Buick Regals - you name it. Drivers like Pete Berken, Jim Duchow, Dennis Dietzen, Jerry Smits, Russ Keberlein. There were often two semi-features and five heats, and 40 cars was the exception rather than the rule.

Joe Verdegan

Grall competed in what was dubbed "the Imposter Impala." It was a unique homemade creation that cost Grall a fraction of money to build than his foes' machines. "Those were fun times back then," recalled Grall. "One of the reasons I decided on the IMCA stock car is that you can take it to so many different tracks around here. I go down to Boone, Iowa, for the IMCA Supnationals each year, and I've tried to stay on top of things."

The IMCA stock car Grall bought from Mullen was intended for one of Mullen's sons. "I guess they might put him in a modified instead," said Grall. "The car's a '78 Chevy Malibu. I took it home and started torching it, changing some things right away."

As for where Grall will concentrate his efforts, it's all up in the air. "When I started racing in the '70s it was all dirt half-miles. DePere, Shawano and Seymour. Tracks were wet and heavy. Now, each track has so many divisions of cars that the tracks a lot of times dry out. This class of car seems to run well on the wet or the dry. I'll probably hit Antigo and Shawano, maybe Seymour once in a while, too. I'd try Luxemburg, but it's such a fast little track. I wouldn't wanna get in anyone's way there." The car will sport the number 2, just like Grall sported years ago.

Speaking of IMCA, it will be interesting to see how many teenagers take advantage of the new rule that allows 14- and 15-year-olds to compete in the hobby stock class. It's pretty common to have teenagers race in the four-cylinder cars, but to be able to race in a full-sized car could appeal to some more folks.

In pavement news, Terry Baldry, the all-time track champion record holder for the Fox River Racing Club, will run Thursday nights full-time for Matt Maynard's number 96 ride this summer. Baldry, who won the title with Buco Racing last year, ran special events with Maynard last year. Rod Wheeler and Maynard split up, and Wheeler will be going back to racing for his dad, with the familiar number 5 coming back to Thursday nights. From what we're hearing, Buco Racing still plans on fielding their car this year, with a couple of NASCAR Midwest Series hotshoes being rumored to possibly replace Baldry.

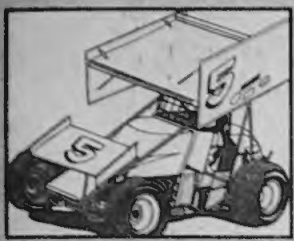
Tom Gee, Jr., last season's FRRC limited late model champion, will move up to the late model division full-time in 2005. Gee, who hails from Sobieski, will be using the same car he drove to the LLM title last year. Gee is a graduate of the Wisconsin sport truck ranks.

In an effort to fight Mother Nature's often unforgiving month of May, the Fox River Racing Club has decided to push back its racing schedule further into the summer. The first Thursday night show this season will be on May 19. Last year's Sunday afternoon experiment set the club back quite a bit financially. The first actual stock car race at WIR's D-shaped, half-mile paved oval will be for the Wisconsin Challenge Series on Sunday afternoon, May 15.

Interesting to note that there is no Memorial Day weekend event scheduled at WIR, but there will be a NASCAR Midwest Series stock car race scheduled there on Tuesday night, August 2.

That's all for now. Parents, give your kids plenty of hugs, because life can be short. Every day on this earth is a true gift. I can be reached by e-mail at <verdegan1226@msn.com>. God bless!

The Infield



Season's greetings to all of the methaholics out there. Despite all of the joyous celebrating, I am asking that we all take a few moments to remember a few groups out there who maybe we sometimes wonder about. First and foremost, our American forces scattered throughout the world. Last year at this time, when the war in Iraq was still fresh in all of our minds, it was easy to stop and say a short prayer for them, but time has a tendency of glazing over our thoughts and making their memories a bit more distant. As an Air Force vet I know what it's like spending the holiday season away from family, and even as a cop I knew that, regardless of the occasion, the job has to be done.

To all of our troops and their families taking a moment to see what's going on back in the world, a special holiday greeting to you. To those keeping the faith and doing what has to be done, God bless you and your families. Those sacrifices may seemingly go unnoticed, but believe me, they will forever live on with you and yours.

I also want to send out a personal best wishes to Danny Smith and all who have already come to his aid after a fire literally destroyed his shop and all of its contents. The good news here is that no one was hurt in the afterhours incident, but the equipment (enough for two race-ready cars), along with all of Danny's memorabilia from a very long and illustrious career, is now just a memory.

Now I know there are a few of you reading this asking why I would bother mentioning this at all. After all, don't I work for the IRA? Danny isn't a regular IRA competitor, right? Wrong! Danny is a racer, and if anyone has been reading anything I have been reading over the past few months in this column, you should know by now that I really don't like to draw those lines that would define a particular driver as "one of ours." In my book, they are *all* ours. That is said as a fan of racing. Period! Like it or not, I really don't care. The way I see it, those lines are more defined about who likes what food anymore than what organization or track a driver competes at. It makes no difference. A racer is a racer.

So what about Danny? Well, not only does he show up at an IRA-flagged event when the opportunity knocks, but more importantly he's a racer. And he's a racer right now who is really facing a tough challenge. Can he beat it? Like I said, he's a racer, so that goes without saying. Speaking with Allen Kieger, Smith's short-term goal is to have something ready for Florida, so the task at hand is to take stock and bounce back. Several fans and businesses have already stepped forward to offer help, including FoxCo's shop, but there's a long rebuilding task ahead.

Some bright spots did come up in my conversation with Allen. "We just moved the Kenny Rogers car up to the dealership for display last week. If we would have lost that, Danny would have been just devastated. Also, all three of our sponsor's motors are still up at their shop." Danny did lose his own motor in the blaze as well.

Several teams have said that they were going to set up donations during the Chili Bowl in Tulsa. Other than that, fans can help by buying Danny Smith T-shirts. If you are interested in helping out, contact Allen at (317) 403-7913 or Dave Conn at (317) 796-0538. In addition, a recovery fund has been established at the North Salem State Bank in Danville, IN. Details for the recovery fund are below.

Another group that deserves a pat on the back, as well as a warm cup of hot chocolate for their hard work and effort during this season of giving, is the members of "Robin's Annual Toy Drive for Cancer Freedom." The non-profit group was started eight years ago when young Robin Krawchuk received the magic word "remission" after being diagnosed with Leukemia. Older brother David started out by collecting toys and donating them to Robin's hospital as a way of saying thanks, and since then the drive has turned into a nearly year-round project, collecting nearly 2,000 toys and distributing them to five local hospitals as well as families in need in southeastern Wisconsin. Presents are personally delivered to hospitalized children and are collected with the help of VFW #1865 in Kenosha as well as the Sommers Fire Stations #1 and #2. In addition, the drive is expanding this year to reach out to those stationed in Iraq and Kuwait.

The efforts of the community, combined with local businesses and charities, including "Hearts of Families" in Milwaukee, are preparing to send a community care package to those separated this holiday season. This season, the efforts of Robin and David Krawchuk, Scott and Theresa Uttech, and everyone else involved remind us that there are really a lot of good people still out there who do want to help! To find out how you can help out or get involved, call them at (262) 552-2868 for more information.

Notes and news from the infield: In keeping somewhat with last month's theme, here are just a few more moments from 2004 that bear repeating!

Fred Ebler is another racer who just simply refuses to let bad luck get to him. Visit him sometime and no matter what happened, at some point in time I will guarantee you that before you walk away a smile will cross Fred's face. Case in fact: Leaving Superior after a somewhat disappointing June evening, Fred's tow rig decided to test his constitution further by dumping the transmission literally in the middle of nowhere. Now, here I am tooling down US 53 south when I spot a hauler sitting along the road, so naturally I stop to see if help has been summoned. (There's got to be something about Superior, as

Paul Pittman

I've seen more strange things happen to transporters one way or the other to Superior than at any other track. Does anyone remember Greg Frost's rookie year indoctrination?)

So here sits Fred, bummed out and waiting for the wandering bear or moose to come out of nowhere. I walk up to his window and the first thing out of his mouth is, "Ca I get a DUI ticket if I am sitting in my race car?" Then the smile! Not expecting that, I simply got the details and headed about ten miles or so to the closest phone to summon help - at 2 am! Upon returning and relaying the news of an eventual rescue, Fred's concern was for the next night at Cedar Lake. Is this guy a racer or what?

Before the show at Red Cedar, I got to spend a few moments talking with Travis and Lori Whitney about racing and married life in general. While the bulk of this conversation is still an unpublished story (hint), it was funny at how much the couple varied on a few issues, not the least of which was what type of track they liked. Lori was very adamant about the optimum track being a racy, tacky joint that allowed a maximum of excitement. Travis, on the other hand, in his quiet, soft-spoken way, pined for a dry-slick surface that allowed him to use his abilities. I am guessing that the trip home consisted at some point of a further debate of this issue, and I would further venture to say that Travis' point was driven home the hardest. After all, he did win the race over some of the best in the business! When it's all said and done, though, a lot of Travis' success has got to be attributed to his father Walt. The man can read a track and forecast conditions like very few out there, and knowing that, with confidence, makes the rest of the night elementary.

One more quick trip down memory lane: Those who were at the Wayne Daun Memorial at the Wilmot Speedway saw Ty Bartz put on an absolute driving clinic during the B-main, passing 14 cars in as many laps to make the "A". Now Ty is the subject of an upcoming article in *Flar Out* magazine, and in it I touched on the fact that the team has not missed an IRA event since starting with the series six years ago. Holy Brett Farve, Batman! At the IRA awards banquet, Ty once again left everyone speechless and proved why he is one of tomorrow's more charismatic leaders.

Well, that will do it for this issue. I hope you made it this far and also hope you remember to keep all those mentioned above in your thoughts and prayers - not only in this holiday season, but every day. As for the Danny Smith Recovery Fund, you can make donations in Danny's name to the North Salem State Bank, 785 E. Main Street, Danville, IN 46122. Questions and comments can be sent to me at <arppix@arppix.com>. God bless, and a safe New Year to you all from Amanda, Destiney, Alexia and myself.

Runnin' the High Groove

Paul Kuyawa, Jr.



Ask ten people to name what they feel is "something special," and there would be ten different answers. As it should be, we hold different things close to our heart.

Gamering the top number of votes for me and my family was "time spent with loved ones." My seven-year-old daughter picked "family" over everything else. Did I mention I'm very proud of Dana?

Of course, we all have our favorite holidays, or perhaps a wedding or anniversary is something special. Outside of family and friends, most people have an event they hold as something they regarded as "special." If I were to throw in a black bicycle hand grip into the "something special" vote, I am sure most would think, "well, the guy has finally lost it." Why would a grown man think a bicycle hand grip is important?

Well, many years ago - 1973, to be exact - I was 13 years old and I had been given my first real job. Oh, sure, I had done the paper route deal like others, but this was different - this was a job where there specific things that had to be done and hours had to be kept track of, just like Dad at his job. My position was sort of made for me. It was at the race car shop two blocks from where I lived. Dad had told me about, and from that point on I spent my free time just hangin' around the place. At some point the men who worked there figured they could use someone to clean the place up at night. Since I was around the shop so often I was the perfect candidate for the job.

Marescalco Enterprises had two principal men working there. Randy Marescalco, the owner, would build the actual race cars and do any fabrication work that came in the doors. Randy was and still is a tremendous fabricator, and the race cars and street rods he built were pieces of art. This guy could weld; he could lay down a perfect bead if he was hung upside-down. A real Picasso of the heli-arc.

Jim Wellman was the other dude at the shop - the engine man. This guy could get more out of a small block than anyone in the area. Together with Marescalco's race car chassis fabrication, the two built a supermodified that would become a terror on the pavement. I sort of looked up to Randy as one of my heroes, as I was so amazed at his ability to make things.

It was Wellman who first caught me one spring day as I rode past the shop hoping for an open door to spy on the progress of the race cars inside.

"Go see Randy. He wants to talk to you," he said.

I can still remember my legs getting rubbery as I entered the shop and my mouth getting dry.

Marescalco sat behind this big desk adorned with racing stickers, and behind him was a huge picture of his 1972 race car that had been piloted by Denny McKay. Randy asked me if I would like a job cleaning up the shop and helping out where I could. This would include cleaning the race car, filling the truck with the needed equipment to go racing - your basic "gofer" job description. Well, this 13-year-old was on cloud nine! A job at a race car shop? Needless to say, he didn't have to ask twice, but I still needed to clear it with Mom and Dad. After a promise to keep my grades up I was off to my first real job.

Marescalco had told me that his driver from last year, McKay, would not be returning to pilot the race car. He

announced that he had a new driver for his car - then-defending Interstate Racing Association champion Johnny Reimer. While he was sure that I knew who he was, he asked me anyway. My answer must have been something like, "You're kidding!" Everyone who went to the area races knew who Reimer was; he also was one of heroes in my younger days. Marescalco told me that Reimer was coming down to get fit for the new car and I was welcome to hang around and meet him, if it was okay with my folks. I don't remember what I promised to do at home, but after some wheelin' and dealin' I was sprung from curfew to meet my hero, Johnny Reimer.

For a 13-year-old, I didn't think it could get any better than this.

After a few months on the job Marescalco presented me with one of the team racing jackets, complete with my name on the front. Man, did I think I was somebody when I had that jacket on. I remember wearing to school one day - I must have gotten ten bathroom passes that day just to check on that coat.

With the race car completed and only days before the first race, someone noticed that there was no hand grip on the clutch handle. I volunteered a black one I knew I had at home. It was a perfect fit. Finally, I thought, I was able to contribute something to the new race car.

As the race season started Dad and I would go and watch the team. I still had to sit in the grandstands because of my age, but that was okay because I knew nothing about a race car at that time of my life, anyway.

Then someone had idea of sneaking me into the pits so I could see things from the other side of the fence. That hooked me even deeper into racing, and for the majority of the '73 season I was a stowaway in the team's hauler. I stayed close to the car and always looked like I belonged, so no ever asked me if I had bought a pit pass. This was a habit that I carried on into my adulthood - always trying and generally succeeding in not buying a pit pass.

Now, I don't promote the idea of a youngster snookering a race track out of a pit pass, but if he or she should happen to forget to get out of the back of the truck, and forget to uncover themselves, then ... well, let's just say that at the time it seemed okay.

I really loved that bright red number 1 race car that Marescalco built and Reimer drove. As the 1973 racing season progressed it was clear to see that this team was the one to beat on any of the circuit's paved venues. With Reimer driving, Marescalco tuning the chassis and Wellman providing gobs of horsepower, the rest of the competition was racing for second when this team pulled in. To be part of this at such a young age is something I treasure.

At season's end, the team had racked up enough feature wins to fill one side panel with win stickers. But all good things must come to an end, and the end of the Marescalco-Reimer team came at the end of 1973. Marescalco sold the super to Carmen Manzardo, complete with my handgrip, and Reimer returned to the famed A3 supermodifieds of Lake Villa, IL, contractor Freddie Neilsen, who was also racing late models in central Wisconsin against the likes of Dick Trickle, Tom Reffner and Joe Shear. Marescalco saw the handwriting on the wall, as the supermodifieds began a decline in the middle 1970s, so he began work on a late model Camaro to do battle on the central Wisconsin circuit, but other business ventures put the race car

on the back burner. I remained one of Randy's employees for a few years after the sale of the Reimer car, but things just weren't the same without a race car.

Manzardo ran Randy's car one year with considerable success, then sold the car to Jim Ratajczyk, who campaigned it for several years. From there I believe ex-racer Rich Bentley bought the car, but he never did much with it, and it was put out to pasture at this point.

I hooked up with Manzardo for several years, including his IRA title run in 1977. Whenever Manzardo decided to go race I was usually only a phone call away. We had some darn good times together - our trip to Florida to race against the New England Super Modified Association; jaunts to Michigan, Illinois and most anywhere in Wisconsin.

Carmen and I remained friends since our 1975 meeting, and that proved instrumental in the return of my hand grip. Roughly four years ago I told Carmen of my intentions of finding a modified to restore. He told me he knew the whereabouts of the car he drove in 1975 - the Marescalco-Reimer supermodified.

Sure enough, a mere ten miles from Carmen's home sat the once-pristine Marescalco race car, complete with my hand grip. Finding the car was one thing, but getting the current owner to part with it proved to be quite a time-consuming adventure, as he only wanted to trade for an even older modified. It seemed almost hopeless to obtaining this car, until my good friend Butch Potter told me he knew the owner and was willing to help bring the car and the handgrip home. Butch went the extra mile in turning the owner to "sell" mode.

On New Year's Day I got a call from Potter, who said the man was willing to sell my handgrip car. Of course there is always a glitch in anything I'm involved in - the guy wanted cash on New Year's Day, and the banks, of course, were closed. But Potter made another trip to get the deal done on the Monday following the holiday.

Finally, with a trailer borrowed from new friend Dan Erikson, Marescalco and I drove to pick up the car he built 32 years ago. Loading was tough, but the winch on Erikson's trailer was a lifesaver, and after some convincing the car was loaded, the removed parts were found, and we were down the road. It was only after a couple blocks of driving did Marescalco and I turn and shake hands and declare the car was going home. Finally my hand grip is home.

A full restoration will be started shortly. Seems Marescalco has all the old blueprints from 1973 when he built the car. Together we will put the bright red number 1 back to its once splendid form. Reimer, Marescalco and myself talked late last year about this project, and now it is going to come true. Much like the Blues Brothers puttin' the band back together, it seems we are putting the racing team and the car back together.

I need to thank Butch Potter for all his work in getting this car back to the proper people, and Dan Erikson for the quick loan of a trailer.

Add another car to the Vintage Modified Stock Car Groups roster. To see Reimer grab that hand grip and ease the Marescalco super back into gear and onto the track will truly be a day to remember.

Stay tuned for further restoration developments. We will try to get out to some of the upcoming trade shows, so we hope to see you there. God bless.

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USAC Unveils 'Next-Generation' Silver Crown Racer

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, December 9 - The United States Auto Club, seeking to build participation, boost competition and expand its fan base within its premier racing program, has developed an evolutionary design that will become the new Silver Crown pavement car for the 2006 racing season. The car made its debut at the annual Performance Racing Industry trade show in Indianapolis.

Following initial testing, which netted extremely positive results, the revised front-engine, open-wheel racer incorporates specific modifications designed to improve many aspects of the car and the series. "Safety was clearly a fundamental factor in our consideration of what USAC wanted to accomplish with this evolutionary design," stated USAC president and chief executive officer Rolie Helming. "Additionally, we wanted to achieve three other primary objectives: simplicity, economic stability and ultimately, performance."

Silver Crown cars are traditionally-styled, 1,500-pound front-engine cars that, when first introduced, ran on the popular one-mile and shorter dirt-track ovals such as the Indiana State Fairgrounds. Until these cars developed their own stand-alone series in 1971, they competed as

part of the National Championship Trail, which included the Indianapolis 500.

However, as the popularity of the series grew, USAC officials continually expanded upon the series' reliable format and moved to include pavement races. Although the Silver Crown cars have been closely tied to the history of open-wheel racing, retaining their original design and engine package, it has remained a long-term goal within USAC to update the styling so that the cars better reflected a more modern look. In addition, increased speeds gave rise to incremental safety modifications that have played a significant role in this progressive design.

USAC's current Silver Crown race car is an upright, traditional design open-wheeler utilizing a tubular frame. The new car will be designated for competition at paved tracks in excess of one mile in length, as well as all shorter pavement venues. Helming pointed out that the new design allows for easy adaptation of the series' current cars while keeping incremental costs to a minimum.

The modifications made are an effective adaptation of traditional open-wheel design and include the addition of sidepods, which will bring an Indy-car look to the Silver Crown machine while protecting the wheels,



USAC, as part of its 50th anniversary season, has developed a new pavement Silver Crown race car, to be introduced for the 2006 season. The design implements safety and handling features that will make it more driveable at the higher speeds attained on the larger tracks that the series runs.

as well as a new front nose that discourages cars from climbing wheels. Driving on one-and-a-half-mile ovals will increase the speed of the cars, especially on the straightaways, but the design allows for increased stability.

Additionally, a fuel cell that sits behind the driver in advance of the redesigned tail section will also make the car safer at the higher speeds expected on the larger

tracks. A secondary function of the new nose, sidepods and tail is to act as an attenuator in the case of impact.

The rear tires will both become 14 inches in width; the right rear has been reduced from 18 inches, although the overall diameter will remain slightly larger to accommodate stagger. Substantial testing of components for fitment and absorption of additional stresses was con-

ducted over the course of the development stage.

Riley Technologies (formerly Riley & Scott) of Speedway has been involved in the concept since the fall of 2003. A prototype of the car has been tested on a half-mile track, then taken to a wind tunnel facility before finally being "shaken down" at Kentucky Speedway, a 1.5-mile tri-oval course. Regular Silver Crown drivers Jason McCord and Tony Ave conducted two tests at the larger track.

Running at larger facilities is another key goal for USAC and ultimately, its entrants and drivers. Playing to larger crowds will increase the competitive series' fan base and, in turn, increase purse sizes as well as driver and sponsor recognition.

"This project is one of the most ambitious in USAC's history," Helming stated. "We are extremely excited about the possibilities for this new car as we continue to expand and refine the (series)."

The current rules package for USAC's dirt-track Silver Crown cars remains unchanged; the overall series will remain a combination of pavement and dirt events. Current and new car owners and builders will be able to utilize the new specs to construct their own machines.

USAC will present its 50th season of professional auto racing in 2005.

Dodge Charger Returns to NASCAR Racing

DAYTONA BEACH, FL, January 11 -- After almost 30 years, the legendary Dodge Charger race car will roar again in 2005, as Dodge Motorsports revealed its modern-era version of the Charger for the NASCAR Nextel Cup Series.

The new Dodge Charger race car will make its Cup Series debut in the Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway on February 20. Four Dodge factory-backed teams, featuring ten drivers, will compete in the Daytona 500.

The newly-designed 2005 Dodge

Charger race car represents Dodge Motorsports' modern-day foundation in performance and technical innovation while retaining original design cues of the baby-blue number 43 Chargers that racing legend Richard Petty made famous in the 1970s, as well as other legends like David Pearson and Bobby Isaac.

The new NASCAR version features the styling and signature grille found throughout Dodge's passenger-car line-up. It takes its design cues from the new Charger production vehicle, including its

crosshair front grille, specific rear fascia and rear side windows.

The development of the race car was led by Dodge Motorsports Engineering with the support of each of Dodge's primary Nextel Cup Series teams - Evernham Motorsports, Petty Enterprises, Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates and Penske Racing South. Much of the on-track testing was done by veteran driver Bill Elliott. NASCAR approved the race car for competition in August.

Roush Announces New Truck Series Crew Chiefs

CONCORD, NC, December 7 -- Roush Racing has announced that Mike Beam and John Monsam have been named crew chiefs of the team's two NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series entries for 2005. Beam will head-up the number 99 truck driven by Ricky Craven, and Monsam will oversee the number 50 truck with driver Todd Kluever.

Beam and Craven have been together before, scoring a NASCAR Cup win at Martinsville in 2001 and three pole positions, at Michigan, Rockingham and Darlington.

Monsam returns to Roush Racing as the crew chief for rookie Kluever. Monsam was instrumental in helping Jon Wood achieve his two wins in the Truck Series in 2003.

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Stewart, Darland Split Fort Wayne 'Rumble' Wins

FORT WAYNE, IN, December 30 -- USAC Triple Crown champions Tony Stewart and Dave Darland captured the 60-lap USAC midget feature events at the "Rumble in Fort Wayne" December 29-30, as USAC returned to indoor racing for the first time in four years.

Stewart, of Rushville, scored a surprise and remarkable victory in the Wednesday night opener, piloting a car he had purchased from Mike Fedorcak that day. The car was activated after sitting idle for two years, and Stewart fought from his seventh starting spot to second in five laps, then overhauled race leader Billy Wease on lap 14 and led the rest of the way.

Darland, of Lincoln, scored a similarly sensational victory in the Thursday night closer, restarting last after an early-race spin, then maneuvering through the field to catch race leader Ryan Litt on lap 42 and leading the final 19 laps.

Trailing Stewart in the opener were Darland, Rich Corson, Tony Elliott and Mel Kenyon. Rounding out the top five in the closer were Aaron Pierce, Fedorcak, Ginny Quinones and Derek Bischak.

Pierce posted the fastest qualifying time for both nights

of racing in the Fort Wayne Memorial Coliseum Expo Center, which is located adjacent to the site of USAC's first-ever race in 1956, the War Memorial Coliseum.

RESULTS

from 12/29:

USAC MIDGETS

Qualifying: Aaron Pierce, 8.089 secs.

Heat 1: Pierce, Derek Bischak, Ginny Quinones.

Heat 2: Johnny Parsons, Tony Stewart, David Gough.

Heat 3: Doug Cross, Ryan Litt, Rich Corson.

Heat 4: Dave Darland, Billy Wease, Patrick Wilda.

Consolation 1: Corson, Tony Elliott, Mike Fedorcak.

Consolation 2: Kyle Robbins, David Thompson, John Heydenreich.

Consolation 3: Gough, Mel Kenyon, John Ivy.

Feature: Stewart, Darland, Corson, Elliott, Kenyon, Pierce, Thompson, Bischak, Cross, Wease.

from 12/30:

Qualifying: Aaron Pierce.

Heat 1: Rich Corson, David Thompson, Mike Fedorcak.

Heat 2: Dave Darland, John Ivy, Dave Fuhrman.

Heat 3: Ginny Quinones, Ryan Litt, John Lucas.

Heat 4: Derek Bischak, David Gough, Ronnie Wuerdeman.

Consolation 1: Pierce, Wuerdeman, Brice Kenyon.

Consolation 2: Rod Anderson, Fedorcak, Johnny Parsons.

Consolation 3: Ike Beasley, Mike Nigh, Mel Kenyon.

Feature: Darland, Pierce, Fedorcak, Quinones, Bischak, Litt, Thompson, Corson, Ivy, Wuerdeman.

Brewco Motorsports Signs Fike to Developmental Contract

CENTRAL CITY, KY, December 20 -- With an eye towards the future, Brewco Motorsports has announced the addition of Aaron Fike into its stable of drivers.

A two-time National Midget Driver of the Year, Fike will team with Greg Biffle in the number 66 Team Brewco NASCAR Busch Series car for 15 races in 2005, which will be Fike's second year in the Series after making 12 starts with Curb-Agajanian in 2004.

"We have had our eye on Aaron for a few months, and he is a driver with a tremendous amount of raw talent," said Clarence Brewer, owner of Brewco Motorsports. "Our hope is to teach him how to be a winning stock car driver both on and off the track. We expect him to be a part of the BMI family for years to come."

Brewco has had a busy off-season, having already announced a switch to Fords for 2005 and welcoming the addition of two new sponsors as well as Biffle and Fike to an existing team that already includes Busch Series veteran David Green. Fike will join the two veteran drivers in an intensive testing program that will help acclimate Brewco to the Ford engines and bodies and the Busch Series rule book for 2005.

Evernham Motorsports Signs Crocker to Driver Program

STATESVILLE, NC, December 8 -- Evernham Motorsports has announced that it has signed sprint car star Erin Crocker to a development deal that will allow the hottest young female driver in racing to compete next year on the USAC Silver Crown, ARCA and NASCAR Busch Series tours.

Crocker, the first female to win a World of Outlaws series sprint A-feature, caught the attention of Ray Evernham and 2004 NASCAR Nextel Cup rookie of the year Kasey Kahne with her performance in open-wheel racing. Evernham partnered with Kasey Kahne Motorsports and has signed Crocker to an agreement that involves her running the Silver Crown Series in a Kahne Motorsports car, along with three Busch Series races and three ARCA races in an Evernham stock car.

Crocker, who grew up in Wilbraham, MA, in a racing family, ran her first event - a quarter-midget race - at age seven. She soon progressed through the ranks, succeeding at every level. Crocker also graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, in the spring of 2003 with a bachelor's degree in Industrial and Management Engineering. Last season, she competed in the World of Outlaw series in 410 winged sprint cars for Woodring Racing and won at Tulare, CA and brought home the North American 410 Sprint Car Poll "Wild Card" award, previously won by Jeff Gordon and Kahne.

Evernham said the addition of Crocker furthers his team's efforts to diversify, and both Kahne and Evernham agree that Crocker is the "real deal," with the talent to win races.

NARA to Sanction East Bay Winternationals

GIBSONTON, FL -- East Bay Raceway Park president Al Varnadore and North American Racing Association president Spencer Wilson have announced that the 29th annual Winternationals at East Bay will be sanctioned by NARA.

The Winternationals will consist of six straight nights of dirt late model racing, including time trials, heats, B-mains and features each night, beginning Monday, February 6. The features will pay \$5,000 to win Monday-Wednesday February 7-9; \$7,000 to win on Thursday, February 10; \$10,000 to win on Friday, February 11; and \$12,000 to win on Saturday, February 12.

During the 2004 Winternationals events at East Bay Wisconsin's Jimmy Mars won three of the six features. Other winners included Kyle Berck, John Mason and Donnie Moran, who captured the finale on '04.

The Lucas Oil NARA DirtCar Series completed its first season in 2004, with Shannon Babb taking three feature wins and the inaugural title. Other winners last season on the tour included Scott Bloomquist, Mike Jewell, Mike Marlar and Eddie Carrier, Jr.

For more information on the East Bay Winternationals week, call (813) 677-7223 or toll-free (877) 457-5611 Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm (Eastern). For more information on the NARA DirtCar Series, call (859) 271-4501.

Franchitti Re-Signs

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, January 12 -- Andreotti Green Racing has announced that Dario Franchitti will return as driver of their Indy Racing League IndyCar Series entry.

Ray Takes DuQuoin Indoor Focus Midget Debut

DUQUOIN, IL, January 16 -- Former USAC Midwest Ford Focus Midget Car Series champion Robbie Ray of Davenport, IA, held off a resilient Brad Loyet in Sunday afternoon's 40-lap "Mid America Ford Focus Midget Nationals" feature at the Southern Illinois Center on the grounds of the DuQuoin State Fairgrounds.

Ray, who has returned to drive his father Mark's ride after running another car in USAC's Carolina-Virginia Ford Focus Midget Car Series in 2004, led all 40 laps in USAC's first Focus midget race of 2005. It wasn't easy for the former Midwest Series champion, though. Despite starting on the pole and moving to the front in turn 1 of the opening lap, Ray endured Loyet's consistent pestering for more than half the feature.

As Ray stepped to the front, Loyet sliced through the field. Starting sixth, he gained three spots in the first six laps and took advantage of an error by Tony Main. A first-timer in USAC Focus midget competition, Main was battling for the point on lap 7, but he spun.

From there, Loyet could only bang on the back of Ray's car, with Ray gaining minimal track space following several cautions. The lead

duo hugged the bottom groove and stretched their lead over the rest of the pack, with Ray rarely giving Loyet an inch.

Ray, who admitted he made mistakes during the event, slid just high enough on lap 49 to allow Loyet a final chance. But Ray closed the door as they entered the backstretch of the sixth-mile temporary dirt oval and held on to pass underneath the twin checkered flags about a car-length ahead of Loyet.

Stephanie Mockler, Ryan Litt and Ronnie Wuerdeman rounded out the top five.

Jimmy Light and Kyle Robbins each flipped on the front straightaway, but both drivers emerged from their cars unscathed. Heat winners included Loyet, Mockler and Adam Kramer.

The second of the two events in the indoor series championship is scheduled for February 19.

RESULTS

USAC FORD FOCUS MIDGETS

Heat 1: Brad Loyet, Jasiel Randolph, Kevin Studley.

Heat 2: Stephanie Mockler, Tony Main, Danny Foster.

Heat 3: Adam Kramer, Robbie Ray, Jimmy Light.

Feature: Ray, Loyet, Mockler, Ryan Litt, Ronnie Wuerdeman, Kramer, Jim Mills, Mark Bush, Jasiel Randolph, Studley.

DIRT MotorSports Acquires Mid-America Racing Series

NORMAN, OK, December 17 -- Boundless Motor Sports Racing, Inc., also known as DIRT MotorSports, announced that it has purchased the Mid-America Racing Series (MARS), a regional late model sanctioning body based in Arkansas.

The series was originally created by Batesville (AR) Speedway owner and promoter Mooney Starr in order to offer local late model drivers a regional late model series with competitive purses. Established in 2000, more than 350 drivers have competed at 24 tracks in seven states during the series' history. In 2004 the series schedule included 33 race nights and paid out \$125,000 in points funds.

Said Boundless chairman & CEO Paul A. Kruger, "The acquisition follows the objectives of our business plan in order to create a more unified late model national touring series that benefits the team owners, drivers, sponsors and promoters."

Along with the recent acquisition of UMP and the Xtreme DirtCar Series, the MARS acquisition strengthens the company's position as the largest and most recognized sanctioning body for sprint, late model and modified dirt track racing in the United States.

'DW' Heads 2005 Motorsports Hall Inductees

TALLADEGA, AL -- Three-time NASCAR Nextel Cup champion Darrell Waltrip heads the Class of 2005 that will be inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame next April 28.

Joining Waltrip as inductees are drag racing icons Joe Amato and Bob Glidden, powerboat champion Chip Hanauer, and Formula 1 and CART champ Nigel Mansell.

"This is a powerful class - one in which each member had a significant impact on his particular form of racing," said Hall of Fame executive director Jim Freeman during the announcement of the group. "All five of them have won multiple championships. It is quite a group."

Waltrip win titles in 1981, '82 and '85, driving for Junior Johnson. He also had 84 wins and 54 poles and was named Driver of the Year three times.

Amato had 54 NHRA Top

Fuel wins and five Top Fuel championships - both records. He also finished in the top ten in each of his 19 seasons.

Glidden captured ten NHRA Pro Stock titles and another in IHRA. When he retired he was NHRA's winningest driver in any class, with 85 career victories.

When Hanauer ended his fine career, he'd won seven Unlimited Hydroplane national and world titles and 61 national events, including a record 11 Gold Cup races.

This ultra-successful quintet will be inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame on April 8, 2005. In addition, the Driver of the Year will also be honored. Reservations for tickets to the black-tie event are available by contacting the Hall of Fame at P O Box 1018, Talladega, AL 35161, or by phone at (256) 362-5002.

Pelkey Dominates 'McCluskey Classic'

TUCSON, AZ, January 1 -- Josh Pelkey of Phoenix led all 40 laps of Saturday afternoon's inaugural "Roger McCluskey Classic" USAC Southwest Sprint Car Series race at the brand-new USA Race Park in Tucson.

Pelkey drove to victory on the 3/8th-mile dirt oval in the first race at the new facility, which drew a capacity crowd.

Trailing Pelkey at the checkered flag were Damion Gardner, Charles Davis, Jr., Rick Williams and Tony Elliott.

Fast qualifier Cory Kruseman failed to finish the 40-lap race, while Kevin Kierce and Tim West escaped injury in separate flips during the race.

Brandon Lane and Mike Rux, Jr., also escaped injury in flips during Friday's qualifications.

The race was the first ever for USAC on New Year's Day.

RESULTS

USAC SOUTHWEST SPRINTS

Qualifying: Cory Kruseman, 17.68 secs.

Dash: Josh Pelkey, Damion Gardner, Kruseman.

Heat 1: Charles Davis, Jr., Tony Elliott, Kruseman.

Heat 2: Jeremy Sherman, Tom Stansberry, Pelkey.

Heat 3: Rick Ziehl, Kevin Kierce, Brandon Lane.

Heat 4: Jerry Coons, Jr., Rick Williams, Tim West.

Semi-Feature: Gardner, Jon Stanbrough, Jay Ervine.

Feature: Pelkey, Gardner, Davis, Williams, Elliott, Coons, Chuck Buckman, Stansberry, Stanbrough, Davey Bateman.

Former Car Owner Fortier Passes

CHICAGO, IL -- Jeff Fortier, 51, car owner for the late Bob Dotter's 1983 Automobile Racing Club of America stock car championship effort, passed away on January 2, 2005.

Fortier and Dotter, who passed away in 2003, teamed up to score three ARCA victories during the '83 season, giving the veteran Chicago driver the second of his three career ARCA championships. Ironically, Dotter drove for three different car owners - Bill Hahnlein (1980), Fortier ('83) and Bill Goudie ('84) - for his ARCA titles.

In recent years, Fortier, of Franklin Park, was involved in local Chicago area short-track stock car racing, and he helped John Nutley win the 2004 late model championship at Illiana Motor Speedway in Schererville, IN.

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Terre Haute Action Track Sets '05 Slate

TERRE HAUTE, IN, January 12 -- As the 2005 racing schedule is released for the Terre Haute Action Track, promoter Jamie Reed is working to finish up major improvements to the facility at the Wabash Valley Fairgrounds. Fans can expect more Saturday night special events as well as a facelift to the entire facility.

The concrete safety barrier which was completed in 2004 will this season don the traditional red, white and blue stripes Terre Haute is known for, and reserved seat holders will be treated to a brand new covered grandstand, courtesy of the Wabash Valley Fairgrounds, as part of a \$250,000 improvement project.

Traditional races, such as the Sumar Classic 100, USAC's Indiana Sprint Week, the Hut 100 and the Tony Hulman Classic, as well as inaugural events like the Highway 41 Shootout, will highlight the 2005 racing season.

Tickets for all races are on sale now, including five-race USAC packages and season passes for a limited time. For more information, contact Lisa Drake at (812) 234-6868.